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THE NEW TESTAMENT CONCEPT REGARDING THE REGIONS OF HEAVEN WITH EMPHASIS ON 2 CORINTHIANS 12:1-4

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In the varied use of ouranos in the New Testament the concept is implied that there are several regions of heaven, and in one place, 2 Corinthians 12:1-4, it is clearly stated that there is in some sense a third heaven. As a matter of fact, in this passage Paul states that he was snatched up, unto this third heaven, into paradise, and that he did not know whether he was in or out of the body in his experience.

It is the purpose of this study to interpret 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 as to the meaning of the third heaven and to the other regions implied, in the light of the concept of ouranos and related words in Classical and Hellenistic Greek, in the Old Testament, in the literature of the Intertestamental period and that of the Dead Sea Scrolls, comparing such usage with the teaching of the New Testament on the subject together with the writings of the Patristic period. The study will be concluded with an examination of the text of 2 Corinthians 12:1-4.

The questions arising in the New Testament and particularly in 2 Corinthians 12 concern how the heaven or heavens mentioned relate to the concept of a plurality of heavenly regions and whether they are to be considered as completely material and spatial, partly so, or not at all, and further, how paradise relates to this concept of heaven. For a more adequate answer to these questions it will be well to observe how writers other than those of the New Testament books used particularly the concept, ouranos.

Ouranos in the Classical and Hellenistic Greek Literature

Ouranos is used from the earliest period of the epic writings of Homer and Hesiod throughout Greek literature, but it never is used in the plural by classical writers.¹ The word conveyed the idea of the vault or firmament of heaven which was thought of as being made of bronze (chalkeos, Hom. Il. 17.425; poluchalkos, Il. 5.504) or iron (sidēreos, Hom. Od.

15.329), this vault idea also being conveyed by Empedocles (steremnion, Placit. 2.11.2 [Vorsokr. 1, p. 209]).

As to spatial relationship, ouranos was conceived of, on the one hand, as the lower heaven, the area of the atmosphere, that part which is wrapped in clouds (Il. 15.192, Od. 5.303), connected with both aithēr and nephēlai (Il. 15.192), being conceived of as the aitheros to eschaton (Zeno, Stoic 1.33 (cf. Ar. Nu. 95 sqq.),² the area above earth into which the flame from watch-fires would ascend into heaven (Il. 8.509); and, on the other hand, as the higher heaven of the stars (asteroenta, Hes. Th. 127; Il. 15.371, Od. 9.527). To the philosophers, Plato and Aristotle ouranos could be conceived of as the totality of all, the universe (Pl. Plt. 269d, Ti. 32b; Arist. Cael. 278^b21, Metaph. 990^a20).³

Ouranos was also conceived of by the Greeks as the dwelling place of the gods, being outside the skyey vault of heaven, inhabited by Zeus (Il. 15.192), called the great heaven and Olympus (Il. 1.497; 8.394) which was thought of in Il. 19.128 as connected with the starry heaven, and which in Il. 5.749-751 and 8.393-395 is pictured as above the thick cloud of heaven, where the gate of heaven (pulai ouranou, i.e., the thick cloud⁴) at the great heaven and Olympus was lifted up and put down by the Hours (hōrai) as though it were a trap door.

Thus, in the classical period ouranos to the Greeks included vault, involved the lower atmospheric heaven, as well as the higher starry heaven, and the universe as a whole, and had in it, in a location near, but above, the atmospheric heaven the dwelling place of the gods.

Ouranos in the Septuagint Old Testament

Ouranos, translating in the Septuagint the Hebrew word, Šamayim⁵ in Genesis 1:8 is connected with the concept of firmament, raqīyaʿ, an expanse.⁶ Further, as to spatial relationship the lower area of heaven is depicted as the place from which the rain descends from the clouds (Gen. 7:11; Deut. 11:11, 17) and the dew comes (Gen. 27:28), the wind blows (1 Kings 18:45), hail falls (Josh. 10:11) and thunder sounds (2 Sam. 22:14).

As to the higher heaven, ouranos is the place in which are found the sun and moon (Gen. 1:16), as well as the stars of heaven (Gen. 22:17; 26:4; Josh. 10:13). In some Scripture references the sun, moon, and planets are thought of as the host of heaven which heathen worship involved (2 Kings 17:16; 23:4, 5; Jer. 8:2).

In some passages the ouranos, together with the earth, is the totality of all the universe when reference is made to God creating the heaven and the earth (Gen. 1:1; Exod. 31:17; Isa. 37:16).

Then, through the phrase, the heaven of heavens (ho ouranos tou ouranou) which seems to be the equivalent to highest heaven,⁷ the thought is suggested that the Hebrews conceived of another heaven beyond the two regions noted above. The expression is used with regard to God's creating not only heaven, and the earth and seas but also the heaven of heavens (Neh. 9:6); to His not being able to be contained in the heaven and heaven of heavens (I Kings 8:27; I Chron. 2:6 (5); 2 Chron. 6:18); and in poetic language, to God as the one who rides upon the heaven of heavens which were of old (Ps. 68:33 (34))⁸ and to whom praise should be made by the heaven of heavens (Ps. 148:4).⁹ There seems implied by this expression a third heaven¹⁰ beyond or apart from the lower atmospheric heaven and the higher heaven of the sun, moon and stars.

Ouranos is the dwelling place of personal beings, such as man, exemplified by Elijah being taken up to heaven in a body¹¹ by a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:1, 11); and God who is pictured as sitting in the heavens (Ps. 2:4), His dwelling place (I Kings 8:30; 2 Chron. 6:21; Ps. 123:1), where His throne is (Ps. 11:4; 1 Kings 22:19; 2 Chron. 18:18).

In summary, most of these categories regarding heaven are to be taken as visible, material and in spatial relationship: the firmament, lower and higher heaven, the heaven as universe, and the heaven into which the body of Elijah ascended. It is likely that the heaven of heavens, a possible third heaven, is to be considered in the same way. That God dwells in heaven is not to be limited to that which is visible and spatial, although the Old Testament Scripture certainly teaches that God, the infinite Spirit, is in personal relation to His heaven and earth which He created.

The Concept of Heaven in the Intertestamental Period

In the Intertestamental Period ouranos is viewed as including the lower heaven from which fire descends (2 Macc. 2:10) the higher heaven of the moon and the stars (4 Macc. 18:5), the general or universal heaven which together with the earth God made (2 Macc. 7:28). Again there is reference to the highest heaven, the heaven of heavens, which man cannot reach, it being the dwelling place of God (3 Macc. 2:15), who is declared to be sovereign in heaven (2 Macc. 15:3, 4) and King of the heavens (3 Macc. 2:2).¹²

Of particular interest in this period is the concept of a seven-fold heaven. In the Testament of Levi 2:7-9¹³ there are presented three heavens with the indications that there are four more to come. Then, in the Testament of Levi 3 there is described a seven-storied heaven with the Great Glory (God) dwelling in the highest part.¹⁴

In the Assumption of Moses 35, a document of the same general time as, or a little later than, the received editions of the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs, and in the Book of the Secrets of Enoch¹⁵ there again occur references to seven heavens.

Thus, in the Intertestamental Period, as in the Old Testament, heaven is conceived of as including lower as well as higher regions, a highest heaven or heaven of heavens, and a place where God dwells. The significant additional concept is that heaven is a seven-storied structure with God dwelling in the highest part.

Heaven in the Dead Sea Scrolls Literature

In this distinctive literature, of course, the Hebrew word used to express the thought of heaven is smym¹⁶ which includes in its use the lower heaven from which comes rain (H 8,17), the universe in general, which God created when He stretched out the heaven (H 1,9), and the place where God and His angels dwell (M 12, 1).

Such testimony, though not as full, agrees with that which is given in the Old Testament.

Ouranos in the New Testament

Ouranos is used many times in the New Testament and basically conveys the same distinctions as to be found in the use of the word in the Old Testament, including the lower heaven of the atmosphere, the place of the clouds (Matt. 24:30; Mark 14:62), from which comes rain (Luke 4:25), fire (Luke 9:54), lightning (Luke 10:18), and hail (Rev. 16:21), and the place in which the birds fly (Matt. 6:26; Acts 10:12).

Ouranos in the New Testament also can convey the idea of the higher heaven, that place of the stars (Matt. 24:29; Mark 13:25; Rev. 6:13), which area is spoken of as the host of heaven (the stars which Israel worshipped, Acts 7:42), and as the powers of the heavens which shall be shaken (Matt. 24:29; Luke 21:26). It is also the general or universal heaven which with the earth is considered the totality of God's creation (heaven and earth shall pass away, Matt. 24:35).

There is a possible suggestion of a plurality of heavens in such expressions as the kingdom of the heavens (ouranōn, Matt. 3:2; 4:17) and your Father in the heavens (Matt. 7:11), but it is difficult to determine sometimes where the plural form, ouranoi is to be taken literally (as probably above) and where it is to be understood only as a part of a formula

following the Hebrew, šamayim, in being plural. For example, there does not seem to be any distinction to be drawn between the singular, ouranos, in Luke 3:21 and the plural, ouranoi, in Matthew 3:16 inasmuch as the same incident is described in both places.¹⁷

However, there are references in the New Testament where ouranoi can be understood properly in the plural sense, implying a third heaven beyond the two regions mentioned earlier; for example, of Christ, our high priest who has passed into the heavens (Heb. 4:14) who has become higher than the heavens (Heb. 7:26) and who has gone up above all the heavens (Eph. 4:10); and of creation, the heavens being the work of God's hands (Heb. 1:10) who created all things, both those in the heavens (plural) and those on the earth (singular, Col. 1:16). Peter declares that at the end of the age there will be a new heavens (plural) and a new earth (singular, 2 Pet. 3:12, 13). We will discuss Paul's third heaven (2 Cor. 12:2) below.

The New Testament also presents ouranos as the dwelling place of God and His angels, for, He is the Father who is in heaven (Matt. 5:45; 6:1), whose throne is there (Rev. 4:2), and His angels are pictured as the multitude of the heavenly host (Luke 2:13, 15).

Thus the New Testament presents the same basic picture of heaven as seen in the Old Testament, including the universal creation of God, the lower and higher heaven, a plurality of heavens which suggest a region distinct from the lower and higher areas, and heaven as the place where God and the angels dwell.

Ouranos in the Patristics

In the Patristics in addition to being used of the higher heaven which contains the sun (Ath. gent. 9, M 25.17 C), and of the general, universal heaven (of heaven and earth, Or. Jo. 1.15), the term ouranos is employed to describe two heavens, (visible and invisible, Thdt. qu. 27 in 3 Reg.) and also the seven heaven concept, which was seen in the Intertestamental Period, it being asserted as being a part of the doctrine of the Gnostics (Iren. Haer. 1.5.2, ANF, Vol. 1), and as being unscriptural (Or. Cels. 6.21 and 6:23, ANF, Vol. IV). The heaven is the dwelling place of Christ who ascended up to heaven (Barn. 15.9), and of angels (Or. Cels. 4.92).¹⁸

Although the usage of ouranos is not as full here, yet it follows the general pattern of thought expressed in the New and Old Testaments.

Paul's Third Heaven of 2 Corinthians 12:1-4

In defending his position as an apostle, Paul in this passage mentions visions and revelations given to him and describes an experience of his in being caught up to the third heaven, into paradise, in which experience he is not certain whether he is in or out of the body. What was the nature of this experience, of the vision, of the third heaven and Paradise, and of his being transported to heaven?

First, it is to be noted that in verse 1, he uses both the words optasia and apokalupsis, the former conveying the idea of vision, in which man is granted the privilege by God of seeing what is ordinarily hidden from human beings (such as Zechariah's vision of an angel in the temple, Luke 1:22, and Paul's vision of Christ on the road to Damascus, Acts 26:19); and the latter depicting the thought of a disclosure or revealing of some truth or information, such as the light of revelation for the Gentiles (Luke 2:32). In 2 Corinthians 12:1 Paul is connecting both words in the one prepositional phrase (eis) and saying that he was permitted to see something usually hidden from men and in the seeing, some basic divine truth was made known to him, a revelation from the Lord.¹⁹ Whether the visit to the third heavens involved just a spiritual ecstatic experience or also involved his physical body is not clarified by these words.

In verse 2 in describing this definite experience Paul states that he was caught up unto the third heaven. In the light of the teaching of the Old Testament concerning the plurality of the heavens, and indeed concerning three regions of heaven, to which viewpoint the New Testament conforms, the Apostle who was well acquainted with the teachings of the Old Testament, must have had in mind in 2 Corinthians 12:2 a third region quite distinct from that of the lower atmospheric and higher starry heavens, but far different from the limited finite place in which the early Greeks conceived of their gods as dwelling. It is not proper to spiritualize away the concrete reality of the third heaven because of the anarthrous tritou, since ordinal numbers do not require an article (cf. Matt. 20:3; Mark 15:25; Acts 2:15).²⁰

Paul says that he was caught away "as far as," or, rather, "up to" (heōs) the third heaven, with the possible implication that he had gone to the highest heaven, as far as it was possible to go (cf. Acts 1:8, heōs tēs gēs, unto the extremity of the earth). Plummer says:

The heōs does not prove that St. Paul regarded the third heaven as the highest of all, but certainly 'even to the third heaven' would be more naturally used, if the third heaven were the highest, than if there were four other heavens above it.²¹

Paul goes on to say, after some emphatic remarks, that he was caught up into Paradise (ton paradeison), a word indicating an enclosure, a garden, such as the physical garden of Eden (Gen. 2, 3) and also a place of blessedness apart from, or above, the earth (as in Luke 23:43), the latter idea being the meaning here.²² That paradise in verse 4 is to be equated in some sense with the third heaven in verse 2 is to be preferred (although not absolutely provable), since both sentences begin with the same statement, "I know such a man," the repetition being given in order to bring emphasis; and since, in connection with both statements, there are the same linguistic expressions in the snatching away (harpagenta hērpagē) and the statement of uncertainty as to whether the event was experienced in the body or not. By using eis in verse 4 instead of the heōs of verse 2 he may be indicating that paradise is within the region of the third heaven. That the third heaven and paradise are combined elsewhere is seen in the Assumption of Moses 37, and 40, written at a time not far removed from that of Paul.²³

Related to the subject of the third heaven and paradise which is the place where God dwells and where Christ went following His death (Luke 23:43) is the question as to whether a material, physical body may inhabit it in a spatial manner. In 2 Corinthians 12:2 and 3 Paul says twice in connection with his visit to the third heaven and paradise that he does not know whether he was in or out of the body (eite en sōmati eite chōris [ektos] tou sōματος), which statements allow for either of two interpretations, either that he was taken up in bodily form to the third heaven, or that his spirit, removed from the body, was taken up by itself²⁴ (cf. Christ and the thief on the cross following death, Luke 23:43). To be sure Paul makes it clear that he was conscious of the transfer regardless of how it happened,²⁵ and by his very uncertainty as to which of two distinct ways the event could have transpired, he implies that his physical, material body could just as well have gone to the third heaven as could his spirit alone. In the Scripture there are two illustrations where physical bodies went out into space somewhere: Elijah who went to heaven in a whirlwind (2 Kings 2:1, 11), his body later not being found (v. 17); and Christ who with His resurrection body ascended up into the cloudy heaven in which manner he is to return (Acts 1:9-11; 1 Thess. 4:16-17).²⁶ Note that in the two passages just cited the singular (ouranos) is used in a context where clouds are mentioned, whereas in places where Christ (who, it is implied in the New Testament, has retained His resurrection body²⁷) is depicted as having reached His ultimate place of triumph, glory and honor, the plural (ouranoi) is employed, as exemplified in Hebrews 4:14 and Ephesians 4:10, where Christ, our High Priest and Redeemer is seen as having passed into the heavens, even above all the heavens--all there is He has entered into.

CONCLUSIONS

As to the regions of heaven, we observe that the New and Old Testaments agree in conceiving of heaven as basically involving three different areas, the lower, the higher and highest heaven in the last of which God particularly dwells, and we conclude that Paul in 2 Corinthians 12:1-4 has this last area in mind when he talks about the third heaven, implying the two other regions by his use of the word, third.²⁸

Furthermore, the third heaven where God dwells and where Paul received divine instruction is not to be thought of necessarily as involving a spiritual, non-spatial relationship only, but also as involving space, somewhere out there in the highest or third heaven, beyond our immediate earth and heaven, there being a place where a human being with a body and God who is everywhere can meet.

DOCUMENTATION

1. H. G. Liddell, R. Scott, A Greek-English Lexicon, a new edition, revised and augmented by H. S. Jones and R. McKenzie (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1953), "ouranos."
2. But note that in (II. 2.458, 17.425, 19.351, [cf. Sch. II. 3.3]) ouranos is above the aithēr.
3. Plato (Ti. 32b, c) calls such a universe, ouranos, visible and tangible (horaton kai hapton) and speaks of it also as the cosmos (ho kosmos).
4. See II. 5.751; 8.395 where in the context the words, pukinon nephos are used.
5. Ouranos is used to translate several Hebrew words, but almost all of the uses are a translation of šāmāyim (in the Aramaic section of Daniel it is š, mayyi). E. Hatch and H. A. Redpath, A Concordance to the Septuagint, Vol. II, (Graz-Austria: Akademische Druck--U. Verlagsanstalt, 1954), "ouranos."
6. E. A. Speiser translates it "expanse" in Genesis 1:8 and says, "Traditionally 'firmament,' . . . [which] goes back to the Vulg. firmamentum 'something made solid,' which is based in turn on the LXX rendering of Heb. rāqīa' 'beaten out, stamped' (as of metal) suggesting a thin sheet stretched out to form the vault of the sky. . . ." Genesis in The Anchor Bible (Garden City, N. Y.: Doubleday and Co., 1964), p. 6. See the discussion above for the early Greek concept of heaven as a vault of bronze or iron.
7. Brown, Driver, and Briggs (op. cit., šāmāyim) indicate that, š, mey haš-, means the highest heaven in such references.
8. "The heavens of heavens (Deut. 10:14) are by gedem described as primeval (perhaps, following the order of their coming into existence, as extending back beyond the heavens that belong to our globe,

of the second and fourth day of Creation). God is said to ride along in the primeval heavens of the heavens (Deut. 33:26), when by means of the cherub (18:11) He extends His operations to all parts of these infinite distances and heights." Franz Delitzsch, Biblical Commentary on The Psalms, tr. F. Bolton, Vol. II (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1955), pp. 270, 271.

9. This phrase, heaven of heavens, means, "the highest heaven, conceived as in an indefinite ascending series." C. A. Briggs, and E. G. Briggs, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Psalms, Vol. II, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), p. 539. On Psalm 148:4 Delitzsch says, "The heavens of heavens are, as in Deut. 10:14, I Kings 8:27, Sir. 16:18, and frequently, those which lie beyond the heavens of the earth which were created on the fourth day; therefore, they are the outermost and highest spheres." Op. cit., Vol. III, p. 406.
10. W. R. Harper, in speaking of the heaven of heavens, interprets it as a third heaven and refers to Deut. 10:14; I Kings 8:27, and Psalm 148:4. A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Amos and Hosea in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), on Amos 9:6, p. 191.
11. It is to be observed that Elijah's body was looked for on earth and was not found.
12. There are a number of other references suggesting similar thoughts in this Apocryphal literature. See Hatch and Redpath, op. cit., "ouranos," and R. H. Charles, The Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, Vols. I and II (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1913).
13. The received editions of The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs seem to have come "from Jewish-Christian hands which supplemented and reworked (rather than merely interpolated) Essene editions." F. M. Cross, Jr., The Ancient Library of Qumran and Modern Biblical Studies, rev. ed. (Garden City, N. Y.: Anchor Books, Doubleday and Co., 1961) p. 200, footnote 6. It may well be that the original Hebrew of the Testaments dates from c. 100 B.C. as contended by Charles (op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 282, 290).
14. Charles notes, "The sixth, fifth and fourth heavens are introduced [between vss. 5-8] but there is still a gap between v. 3 and v. 8, as there is no third heaven mentioned in 3 (a). The descending order is a witness to the original text, which thus enumerated the angels in the third heaven." Op. cit., Vol. II, p. 306.
15. Suggested dates for these documents are: The Assumption of Moses, between 60 A.D. and 300 A.D., probably of the earliest part of this period; and the Book of the Secrets of Enoch, in its present form, 1-50 A.D., or later. Charles, op. cit., Vol. II, pp. 129, 429; and Cross, op. cit., p. 202, footnote 7.

16. The reference letters and numbers are those used by Karl Georg Kuhn, ed., in the Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexten (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1960).
17. Cf. Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., "ouranos."
18. For further elaboration on the patristic use of ouranos, see G. W. Lampe, ed., A Patristic Greek Lexicon Fascicle 4 (Oxford: at the Clarendon Press, 1965), "ouranos."
19. See A. Plummer, The Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians, in The International Critical Commentary (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1915), p. 338.
20. See H. A. W. Meyer, A Critical and Exegetical Handbook to the Epistles to the Corinthians (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1884), p. 676.
21. Plummer, op. cit., p. 343.
22. Cf. Arndt and Gingrich, op. cit., "paradeisos."
23. See above in the discussion of heaven in the Intertestamental Period.
24. See H. Alford, The Greek Testament, Vol. II, 5th ed. (London: Rivingtons, 1865), p. 710.
25. Plummer, op. cit., p. 342. He certainly was conscious of receiving words (hrēmata) from the Lord in the place to which he was transferred, for he heard (ēkousen) them, and he states that as man (anthrōpos) it is not lawful for him to speak them.
26. In the Patristics likewise it is born out that the body of Christ went into heaven (anabainōn hōs anthrōpos kai anapherōn eis ton ouranon hēn ephorei sarka), Ath. Ar. 348. Lampe, op. cit., "ouranos."
27. Christ's resurrection body, the physical body in which He was crucified (compare the scars evident as a result of the nails and spear, Luke 24:39, 40 John 20:25, 27) and in which He ascended (Acts 1:9-11) was one, as to its form and substance, as was true in its character before death, that could be touched (Matt. 28:9; John 20:25-28), assimilate food (Luke 24:30, 42, 43), occupy space (His body that was touched was confined within a room, John 20:26-28), and yet it was a body which could somehow appear and disappear instantly (Luke 24:31; John 20:19, 26). It is this kind of body to which the resurrection body of the Christian is to be made like (metaschēmatisēi. . .summorphon, Phil. 3:21) and which kind of body that shall rise in space to meet Christ in the air according to I Thess. 4:16, 17, in which passage not only the dead in Christ but also those who live in a physical body at the time shall rise in the clouds to meet the Lord. This hardly seems to be a body devoid of flesh (in the resurrection, an immortal and incorruptible flesh, or fleshly material substance, which has been delivered from Adam's curse) as suggested by Oscar Cullmann, Immortality of the Soul or Resurrection of the Body (London: The Epworth Press, 1958) pp. 37, 45, 46.
28. Observe his recognition of the cloudy heavens in I Thess. 4:16, 17.

SAUL, THE SPIRITIST, AND SAMUEL

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Two books have been written in recent years which expound the modern version of necromancy. The first is called A Gift of Prophecy and is the story of Jeane Dixon and her amazing series of predictions. The second book, A Search for the Truth, was written by the same author, Mrs. Ruth Montgomery, only this time the story revolves around her own adventures in the realm of the psychic. She, too, like her friend, Jeane Dixon, has experienced contact with the "other side" through a "control" or a spirit who is able to impersonate the voice of the dead.

In each case the woman claims to be a devout believer in God. Mrs. Montgomery describes Jeane Dixon in this manner:

... Jeane Dixon has declined to accept any remuneration for a talent which she believes God bestowed on her for a purpose. Devoutly religious, she will use her strange gift only for the benefit of others. She believes that if she were to take money she might lose this talent.¹

For Jeane Dixon, having a vision is similar to what David said in Psalm 23, "My cup runneth over."

Once you have had a vision like that nothing in this world can awe you. You feel that at last you understand the word 'love.' You know what it is truly to worship God. You yearn to develop the talent that He has assigned you; to do His work on this earth.²

Reference is made to the story of Saul and the witch of Endor (and many other supernatural appearances) as Biblical evidence that what they are doing is within the scope of the will of God.

The spirit of Samuel conversed with Saul in I Samuel. An angel came to feed Elijah, in I Kings; and angels protected the three Hebrew children from the fiery

furnace, in the third chapter of Daniel. The book of Daniel also records that 'then was the secret revealed to Daniel in a vision.'³

After all, did not the witch bring up Samuel at the request of Saul? Further, was there not a genuine message from God which came from this seance, and did it not come to pass exactly as the spirit-medium indicated?

Historically, this passage has been appealed to from both sides of the fence. Some would like it to prove that we can indeed keep in touch with our dead loved ones. Others, such as the Seventh Day Adventists, go to great lengths to prove it was not a real appearance, because they have already decided that the dead are unconscious.

There is reason enough, therefore, to investigate this portion of God's revealed Word in order to discern the mind and purpose of God in this event. Was Samuel really called up from the dead, and if so, by whom? Or was it in reality all a trick? Or, perhaps Satan used this as an opportunity to confuse Saul. It is the purpose of this study to seek answers to these questions.

SAUL'S CONDEMNATION OF SPIRITISM

Here is a man of definite contrasts. Indeed, it is so much so that the very conversion of Saul is a subject of valid dispute. He seems at one time to be repentant, but immediately thereafter he lapses back into a state of vicious attack on his own son (cf. I Sam. 20:33). The reason this particular fact is mentioned stems from the fact that at the outset of this incident Saul is presented as having outlawed all kinds of necromancy in strict obedience to the Law (Deut. 18:10-14), but when he fails to obtain the needed information from the Lord, immediately he turns to that which he has condemned.

That which Saul condemned included but two of the many forms of divination prohibited by the Law of Moses: "Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits, nor unto the wizards; seek them not out, to be defiled by them: I am Jehovah your God" (Lev. 19:31).

Unger mentions a number of other types of divination, among which are hepatoscopy (looking in the liver), belomancy (watching arrows fall various ways), teraphim (consulting ancestral images) (cf. Ezek. 21:21 for all three), astrology (consulting the heavenly bodies, cf. Isa. 47:13), hydromancy (watching how an object floats to which side of a cup) (cf. Gen. 44:5 where this may be Joseph's way of hiding his real identity), and rhabdomancy (using a diving rod, cf. Hos. 4:12).⁴

Saul's concern may have been wider than the two things mentioned, and even these are probably two aspects of one type of divination, necromancy (consulting the spirits of the dead). The "familiar spirit," or 'oh, being the demon present in the body, and the "wizard" or the "knowing one" as the same thing.⁵ Whatever lay behind his sudden concern for this part of the Law while he attempted to murder David and Jonathan on different occasions, the fact remains that this very act was about to backfire against him.

SAUL'S CONFRONTATION WITH THE PHILISTINES

The Strength of the Enemy

At the beginning of I Samuel 28, three things indicate that this was "a war upon a much larger scale than any that had been carried on since the defeat of the Philistines in the valley of Elah."⁶ First, it is said that "the Philistines gathered together all their hosts" (28:1). This included "lords" by the hundreds and thousands, plus David and his small band who were still with them. Second, the place where they assembled their armies was Shunem, from the Hebrew word šunayim which means "two resting places," according to Gesenius.⁷ Thus,

The two armies were therefore encamped on the two groups of mountains that enclosed the broad plain of Jezreel toward the east, or, more precisely, the south-east, between which stretched a valley-plain. From an elevation of about twelve hundred feet Saul could see the Philistine camp, which was only four miles distant.⁸

The Shock of the King

Such a sight had telling effect upon Saul. Perhaps there were several contributing circumstances to his feeling of fear, even to the point of "trembling greatly." For one thing, Samuel was dead (28:1) and Saul had depended much upon him, even though Samuel had to tell him of his sins and blunders. This was a great personal loss to Saul, comparable to the loss of Moses when Joshua was then driven to a dependence upon God. In addition, there was a corollary to this, namely Saul's spiritual loss. He had been drifting away from the Lord for many years, and even though he was mentally disturbed and depressed, he had enough presence of mind to forbid the practice of divination. No doubt this was an emergency measure, to bolster up what spiritual presence of mind remained, but to little avail.

Finally, there was political loss upon his mind. Long since he had been told that the kingdom would be taken from him and now that the Philistines were attacking, he did not know which way to turn! Chapman summarizes it well:

. . .and it was especially inconvenient to Saul that this trouble of war should occur when, by reason of Samuel's long discountenance of his reign, the gradual alienation of able men, the loss to the kingdom of David's powers, and his own private sorrows, it was not possible to gather adequate forces and act with wonted energy.⁹

The Silence of God

On top of all his troubles, Saul could get no response from the Lord. After a superficial reading, it would seem that God was unjust. Saul had tried the three means at his disposal to obtain spiritual help, had he not? God had often spoken to His people through dreams, such as Joseph experienced, the Urim and the Thummim were possibly two stones in the breast-plate of the ephod of the high priest used for making decisions within the will of the Lord, and the prophets received direct revelation. Why then did God not answer, even in a negative way? The answer may be found again in Saul's spiritual condition. When Samuel appears, he reminds Saul that Jehovah is his adversary (28:16) so that there is no real reason for the Lord to answer. But even more to the point is the statement of I Chronicles 10:13-14. "So Saul died for his trespass which he committed against Jehovah, because of the word of Jehovah, which he kept not; and also for that he asked counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to inquire thereby, and inquired not of Jehovah: therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse."

This seems to confuse the issue further. Saul did inquire of the Lord--or did he? Outwardly, of course, he made the attempt, but his heart was not right. Edersheim well observes:

As the event proved, Saul did not really enquire of the Lord, in the sense of seeking directions from Him, and of being willing to be guided by it. Rather did he, if we may so express it, wish to use the Lord as the means by which to obtain his object. But that was essentially the heathen view, and differed only in detail, not in principle from the enquiry of a familiar spirit, to which he afterwards resorted.¹⁰

SAUL'S CONSULTATION WITH THE SPIRITIST

A Disguise and a Request

In his great extremity Saul became desperate for some kind of guidance. His recourse was to ask his servants to find a woman who had a "familiar spirit" so he could inquire of her. Spence refers to the possible identification of the two men and the witch:

Jewish tradition speaks of the two men who accompanied Saul as Abner and Amasa, and further mentions that the witch of Endor was the mother of the great Abner. If this be true, it would account for her having escaped the general pursuit after witches mentioned above in the early days of Saul.¹¹

However, this is only tradition at best. It would seem rather that the woman should be considered as an unknown Canaanite. William Deane reminds us that

Endor was one of those whence Manasseh had failed to expel the old tenants, and it was still inhabited by a mixed population, comprising many Canaanites, who retained their old superstitions, and were imitated by their Jewish fellow-citizens.¹²

Deane has in mind Judges 1:27 where the tribe of Manasseh failed to drive out the inhabitants of Dan, among other towns. An additional argument against the witch being the mother of Abner is the distance from the tribe of Benjamin where Abner's family originated.

Whoever she was, Saul did not want her to know who he was, and so disguised himself, and took the further precaution of going to see her at night. There is as much mystery in how she finally recognized Saul as there is in the appearance of the king at such an unusual place. Saul obviously did not want his own people to know that he was breaking his own law. He had tried to enforce a law concerning a vow against Jonathan sometime before, so now he must not be caught doing what he himself had forbidden. Later, the woman does recognize Saul, but for the moment he is safe.

His request would not sound unusual to this spirit-medium. No doubt many times before she had been called upon to do the same type of thing, and had given satisfaction to her inquirers. From the viewpoint of Saul, it indicates how low he had sunk spiritually. For all his drifting away from Jehovah, it is never once said of him that he worshipped false

gods. Even though he may have been insincere in his worship, it was always to Jehovah. But now, he resorts to another means, forbidden by the Lord and thus, in effect, idolatry.

A Denial and a Reassurance

As a matter of protection, the woman reminds the stranger that the king had made it very difficult, yea impossible for such a practice to continue. It would seem that more conversation than the divine record has preserved is implied. In such a dangerous situation this woman would have talked to Saul's servants beforehand to ascertain their genuine desire for a seance, and to know how they had heard of her. Only then would she have made final inquiry of the stranger himself as a delaying tactic if not an outright refusal to reveal her professional talent.

So it was then, that Saul swore by Jehovah that no guilt would fall to her for that which she would do. This reassurance may have been the first indication to her that this was no ordinary man, but it hardly seems that the full impact of his identification had gotten through to her at this point. After she fully recognized him as Saul, her mind may have flashed back to this statement, as she thought, "How can anyone give such a guarantee that I will not be held responsible for flaunting a royal prohibition?"

A Discovery and a Reaction

In order to fulfill her task, the witch had to know specifically who it was he wanted to contact. "Bring me up Samuel" replied the king. Here is a second point of reference which (when coupled with the authoritative assurance that she would not die for what she was about to attempt) would naturally cause her to classify this stranger in a more definite category. Benson also notes that, in the next verse (28:12), the Hebrew particle translated "when" is not in the text so that the phrase "And when she saw Samuel she cried with a loud voice" should be "And she saw Samuel and cried with a loud voice."¹³ This fact supports the idea that the whole thing happened rather quickly, and that the period during which she was not fully aware of Saul's identification was short, indeed. Blaikie adds this explanation:

A shriek from her indicates that she is as much astonished and for the moment frightened as anyone can be. Evidently she did not expect such an apparition. The effect was much too great for the cause. She sees that in this apparition a power is concerned much beyond what she can wield. Instinctively she apprehends that the only man of importance enough to receive such a supernatural visit must be the head of the nation.¹⁴

All the foregoing leads us to believe that her entire scheme of things had no time to get into operation. Just as Saul said "Bring me up Samuel," immediately Samuel appeared! At that instant, the full reaction set in. Thou art Saul! Why have you deceived me? Now I will have to be cut off! Doubtless the woman would not have been calmed without the quick reassurance from the king himself--"Fear not, what seest thou?" Now the question to be answered is just this, what did the woman see, and how was it all made possible?

SAUL'S CONVERSATION WITH SAMUEL

A number of theories have been forthcoming in an effort to clarify and define what actually happened at Endor. Did anything or anyone actually appear? As each of these is considered, the final appeal must be, "To the law and to the testimony" (Isa. 8:20), what saith the Scriptures?

A Mental Impression

Our modern young people have been plagued by a minority group in which the "in" crowd can taste of "reality" only through the use of hallucinatory drugs. When these drugs are absorbed into the body, the effect on the individual is so unusual that the mind is expanded, and things are seen which can never be observed under normal circumstances. Something like this may have occurred in the case under consideration. This is the opinion of Erdmann in Lange's Commentary:

Proceeding on the supposition of a connection with mysterious powers, and perhaps under the excitation of narcotics, the women especially (as in heathen magic) who made necromancy a trade, might, through a fit psychical-somatal character, fall into an ecstatic, visionary state (as modern science supposes in somnambolic and magnetic phenomena) in which with superstitious self-deception they had inward perception of the things or persons inquired for (the inquirers of course seeing nothing), and uttered their recollections or anticipations in dull, suppressed tones, so that it seemed as if the utterance came from other voices, particularly as if the professedly summoned person spoke.¹⁵

A number of objections to this theory can be listed:

1. Such a mental state might possibly produce a kind of vision of Samuel, but it would never be in the orderly fashion as the text records.

2. As a corollary, such a visual appearance would not have produced prophecies which would come true in so many details, and so soon.

3. Under the influence of narcotics, it would be highly unlikely that the woman could have had such an orderly conversation with Saul at all.

4. It is unprecedented that God would lower Himself to the use of such a method to produce His Word.

5. This is contrary to the plain statement of the text, which, if read without presuppositions of a narcotic trance on the part of the woman, evinces a normal conversation between Saul and Samuel.

A Psychological Identification

Closely allied to the previous theory, this view takes ecstasy as the means of producing the illusion of Samuel. Accordingly, Saul would still not have seen anything, but the woman had so allowed herself to become emotionally involved and psychologically identified with Samuel, that such a vision was produced. In this case, narcotics need not be involved. This is a common "experience" of modern-day mediums who claim to have actually had visions of people. This does not necessitate demon control or direction, as many such experiences do, to be sure, but it can happen as a purely psychological reaction, as Erdmann notes:

This can be explained psychologically only as by an inner vision, the occasion for which was given by Saul's request to bring up Samuel, and the psychological foundation of which was her inward excitement, in connection with her lively recollection of Samuel's form, which was well known to her from his earthly life, and stood before her mind in vividest distinctness.¹⁶

Objections to this view include the following:

1. If the woman had worked herself into this ecstatic state of mind, she would hardly have cried out with a loud voice upon seeing Samuel; she would have been expecting to see him.

2. If demonic activity were not involved, source of the knowledge would necessarily have to be from God, directly or indirectly, and though it is true that God spoke in visions before through an unbeliever, namely, Balaam, in Numbers 22-24, here the text plainly shows that she was one whose practice was to use a familiar spirit. Thus, it is not likely that God used such a vessel through whom He channelled divine truth of things about to happen.

3. Even in the prophecies of Balaam, there was no individual who came in between the prophet and the Lord in order to produce the message. Balaam received the message and gave it to the people of Israel.

4. To repeat the same objection as against the previous theory, a simple reading of the text leads one to believe that a normal conversation took place between Saul and Samuel with no intermediary.

A Satanic Impersonation

A third possibility along the same line as the two previous interpretations has to do this time with a real form appearing visibly, not just in the mind of the woman. Either Satan himself, or one of his demons responded in the usual way to the divination of the woman. In such a case, it would be necromancy without a doubt, not involving the actual disturbance of the dead, but a supranatural impersonation of Samuel by a demonic being. As Unger says,

. . . it is not the case of a medium bringing back the spirit of a deceased person. . . . Evil spirits impersonate the dead, but they cannot produce them. Only God can do that, as He did in this case.¹⁷

Objections to this satanic or demonic view come from various sources, and may be noted as:

1. The name of Satan or the fact of demon intervention is not mentioned.

Some consider that Satan, in whose service this enchantress was employed, conjured up a personified likeness of Samuel, and that there was an apparition, though a fictitious one. But undoubtedly the historian would have mentioned Satan by name, had this been the case, and not have so repeatedly spoken of Samuel, when the father of lies was meant. To adopt such an hypothesis is, as Henderson (*Inspiration*, pp. 140-145) justly remarks, 'contrary to the style of the sacred writers, and to unsettle the entire basis of divinely inspired narrative!'¹⁸

2. Satan is powerful enough to appear even as "an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14), and he has a lot of knowledge, but even he cannot predict the future in such detail so accurately. Scott expounds this objection more fully.

Satan could not have predicted the several events, which came to pass accordingly, as far as we know, without being inspired of God to do so; and it would give far more countenance to consulting witches, to suppose that He inspired Satan to prophesy by them, than to conclude that Samuel was sent with this tremendous message from God, when Saul consulted one of them. Indeed, this would most powerfully discourage such attempts; as the request of the rich man in hell to Abraham, being entirely vain, is calculated to discourage praying to departed saints.¹⁹

3. Even though the woman was terrified at what she saw, this does not mean that Satan intervened and caused her to see something that she did not expect. As will be shown later, her terror was experienced because God intervened and brought up the real Samuel.

4. Satan, or even an evil spirit, would be acting against himself as Christ said, "if Satan also is divided against himself, how shall his kingdom stand?" (Luke 11:18), in pronouncing judgment on Saul. This objection is raised by Spence:

An evil spirit personating Samuel would not have spoken thus; he would not have wished to help David, "the man after God's own heart," to the throne of Israel, nor would an evil spirit have spoken in such solemn terms of the punishment due to rebellion against God.²⁰

A Deliberate Deception

Getting away from the miraculous now, or even from some kind of simulated or psychological vision, there are some who believe that the woman was an impostor, one who, if she had any powers with familiar spirits, did not resort to any such thing on this occasion. Rather, she used pure and simple trickery, taking advantage of Saul. James Orr is one important proponent of this view:

It may conceivably have been so, but the more reasonable view is that the whole transaction was a feigning on the part of the woman. The LXX uses the word eggastromuthos ("a ventriloquist") to describe the woman and those who exercised kindred arts (vs. 9). Though pretending ignorance (vs. 12) the woman doubtless recognizes Saul from the first. It was she who saw Samuel, and reported his words; the king himself saw and heard nothing. It required no great skill in a practiced diviner to forecast the general issue of the battle about to take place, and the disaster

that would overtake Saul and his sons; while if the forecast had proved untrue, the narrative would never have been written. Saul, in fact, was not slain, but killed himself. The incident, therefore, may best be ranked in the same category as the feats of modern mediumship.²¹

Several objections may be gleaned from the text of Orr's statement:

1. The woman reported the words of Samuel. Only by eisegesis (reading into the text something which is not there) can this be sustained. The Bible does not say that the woman reported Samuel's words.

2. Orr says that the king saw and heard nothing. This is reading the story with a preconceived idea. The inspired record repeatedly states that Samuel talked with Saul and Saul answered directly.

3. He further states that she guessed the outcome of the battle, and what would happen to Saul and his sons. She might be able to guess that Israel would be defeated, but she could hardly guess that Saul and his sons would be killed. They might have escaped by hiding or by fleeing.

4. Finally, he says it was all a trick through the use of ventriloquism. She could have made up a story and reported it through a feigned voice, but she would certainly not take the chance of being wrong concerning the death of the king and his princes, or, for that matter, about the defeat of Israel. This would be especially true in view of the fact that those with familiar spirits had been outlawed with the death penalty for those who persisted in the practice. There are other examples of false prophets who said good things about the king when they were unsure about the outcome of a battle (cf. 2 Chron. 18:4-7). They were not taking any chances.

A Real Apparition

That which satisfies the general scriptural doctrine as well as the specific context, is that Samuel really appeared by direction of God Himself and that the woman, Satan, or demons had nothing to do with it.

A summary of that which actually happened will be helpful, and then support for this view can be shown to answer the supposed objections to it.

The factors leading up to the point at which Saul said "Bring me up Samuel" (1 Sam. 28:11) have already been discussed. It was also noted that the Hebrew particle for the English word "when" is not in the original text of verse 12. Thus, the translation is not "And when the woman saw Samuel, she cried. . ." but simply "And the woman saw Samuel; she

cried. . . ." In a reconstruction of the scene, therefore, there is nowarrant for a long period of time between verses 11 and 12; as a matter of fact, there is no reason for any time lapse between Saul's request and the electrifying, sudden appearance of Samuel which caused the woman to cry aloud. Unger aptly describes it in this way; allowing for a short period of preparation:

The woman doubtless began to make her customary preparations, expecting as usual, to lapse into a trance-like state, and be used by her "control" or "divining demon," who would then proceed to impersonate the individual called for. The startling thing, however, was that the usual occult procedure was abruptly cut short by the sudden and totally unexpected appearance of Samuel. The medium was consequently transfixed with terror, and screamed out with shock and fright, when she perceived that God had stepped in, and by His power and special permission, Samuel's actual spirit was present to pronounce final doom upon Saul. The sight of Samuel was the proof of divine intervention, and was indubitable evidence that the man in disguise was Saul.²²

If there was no period of preparation, the shock would have been even more pronounced upon the woman. This is preferable in light of the missing word "when."

At this point in the narrative the woman recognized Saul, and with his reassuring reply that she should not be afraid, he also asked for a description of that which she saw. Replying, she gave an accurate account of the aged Samuel dressed in a meil, or a judge's robe, commonly worn in that time. There is no reason given why the woman saw Samuel first, if indeed, Saul ever saw him. It can be said that part of God's purpose in having Samuel appear was as a divine rebuke to occultism. This helps to explain why she saw him first. But did Saul actually see Samuel at all? The text uses the words "And Saul perceived that it was Samuel, and he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance." At first reading it would seem that two things militate against the possibility of Saul seeing Samuel, namely that the word is "perceive" not "saw," and that in such a position he could not see anything but the earth beneath his face.

The word "perceive" is the Hebrew word yāda', "to know."

According to Gesenius the word yāda' means 'to know,' 'to be acquainted with.' In the King James Version the word is translated 'to know,' 678 times out of the 773 times it is used. Saul was not guessing for the narrative plainly says that Saul knew he was Samuel.²³

This would at the very least allow, if not prove, that Saul saw Samuel. As Baum goes on to say, the text indicates a direct conversation between Saul and Samuel (28:15, 16, 20) but he does not quite say that Saul saw Samuel. Possibly because Saul was bowed with his face to the earth, it is hard to conceive of any visual contact on Saul's part. It need not be so, however, Bowing to the earth in the presence of the supernatural, or even before men, was common practice in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, but this does not mean that the person remained in that position indefinitely. Abraham bowed before his supernatural visitors in Genesis 18:1-8, but he soon got up and prepared a meal for them. Lot had two angels as overnight guests at Sodom, according to Genesis 19:1-3, and he bowed himself with his face to the earth, but only for an instant. In like manner, Jacob bowed seven times to the earth as he met Esau his brother (Gen. 33:7). These types of incidents could be multiplied. The point is simply this, that Saul did not stay in this position, for later on in the conversation, in verse 20, we are informed that "then Saul fell straightway his full length upon the earth." It could possibly be argued that he had been bowing all the time and at the end of the conversation he merely straightened out, but this is strictly a matter of choice of interpretation. On the basis of the analogy of Scripture where the practice of bowing occurs, it was only at the beginning of the conversation, even in some cases where the divine presence of God is involved.

Ellicott expresses the opinion that Saul may have seen Samuel before he bowed:

It seems probable at this juncture the king saw the form before him when he did obeisance. It is, however, not clear, from the language here used, whether this strange act of reverent homage did not at once follow the description of the woman.²⁴

Unger also prefers this viewpoint:

After the woman's further description of Samuel as 'an old man' coming up, 'covered with a robe' (1 Samuel 15:27), [wrong text in the original; correct text is 1 Samuel 28:14] Saul seems to have glimpsed the spirit of Samuel also, for 'he bowed with his face to the ground, and did obeisance' (v. 14), and the conversation proceeded directly, without any further employment of the woman.²⁵

Some might wonder about and object to the fact that Samuel was "disquieted." Does this prove that it was not really Samuel after all? Does it mean that Satan, or a demon, or even the woman by trickery, said this to deceive Saul? Further, can a spirit be brought back from the dead?

The statement does not mean that Saul brought Samuel back, or that it is possible for anyone to do such a thing, including Satan himself. Of course, Saul was responsible, in a sense, for the incident:

But Samuel might well complain of Saul's sin, as the cause of his mission, without in any way imputing anything to God who sent him. He might well complain that Saul had resorted to magical arts to bring him up and he might well be disturbed with godly sorrow and indignation on this account. . . . Even the Holy One of God who dwells in heavenly bliss, said to Saul of Tarsus, on his way to Damascus, 'Saul! Saul! Why persecutest thou me?' (Acts 9:4).²⁶

Surely this was a highly unusual thing for God to do, and one would be hard pressed to find its counterpart anywhere in the Bible, except to say that angelic beings have appeared on earth in corporeal form, and that Moses appeared in glory possibly as a spirit being without a body, on the Mount of Transfiguration. The problem is not at all in the power of God to accomplish this, but in His purpose for so doing. It is certainly not a contradiction to the story in Luke 16:19-31 wherein Jesus tells of the departure of the rich man and Lazarus. It is true that the saved and unsaved were separated by a great gulf, but the only affirmation there is that they could not pass from one place to the other. Abraham does not say that a spirit cannot return, "but only describes it as useless and ineffectual, so far as the conversion of the ungodly is concerned."²⁷

What was the purpose of God, then, in performing such an act? One purpose has already been noted, that God wanted to show His distaste for divination. Unger observes that this unprecedented appearance was allowed "because it was for the unique intent of divine rebuke and warning to all who resort to occultism, and particularly, to pronounce immediate sentence on Saul for this, his final plunge into ruin (I Chron. 10:13)."²⁸ Jamieson's reasons may be summarized in three categories:

1. To make Saul's crime the instrument of his punishment.
2. To show to the heathen world God's superiority in prophecy.
3. To confirm a belief in a future state after death.²⁹

SAUL'S CONSTERNATION CONCERNING HIS FUTURE

Even if there is some question as to why God chose such a method to get through to Saul, there should, at this point, be little question that it

was God who did it. If extra-biblical evidence is added, there are three who witness to the reality of Samuel's appearance. In the apocryphal book of Ecclesiasticus 16:20 it is recorded of Samuel, that, "after his death, he prophesied, and showed the king his end." The Septuagint adds to I Chronicles 10:13 "Saul asked counsel of her that had a familiar spirit, to inquire of her, and Samuel made answer to him."

Josephus also says, in Antiquities 6:14:2, that it was Samuel who appeared and prophesied to Saul.

What, then, did Samuel's prophecy include? The text suggests four things which caused great consternation on the part of Saul, described by Whitcomb³⁰ as "four blows" to Saul:

Spiritual death (v. 16) "Jehovah is departed from thee and is become thine adversary."

Political death (v. 17) "Jehovah hath rent the kingdom out of thy hand and given it to thy neighbor, even to David."

Military death (v. 19) "Jehovah will deliver the host of Israel into the hand of the Philistines."

Physical death (v. 19) "tomorrow thou and thy sons shall be with me."

Little wonder then, that Saul fell straightway his full length upon the earth, and was "sore afraid" because of Samuel's prophecy, and had to be coaxed to eat. Poor Saul! His consternation was well-founded, for it would soon eventuate in sure calamity!

CONCLUSION

There are a number of mysteries about Saul. Was he a truly converted man? Did his mind become psychologically deranged or organically affected so that he became insanely enamored with the need for success and self-preservation? Did God really send Samuel back after death to prophesy to him?

We have dealt with just one of these, tracing the incident from the place where Saul, faced with a major battle, makes several superficial attempts to consult God, and receives no answer, through the long night journey to Endor to consult the spiritist, to the final outcome when God intervened with the message of doom from Samuel.

Admittedly, there are difficulties in the text; this is the reason for the investigation. But when all the theological smoke clears, we are convinced that the Biblical account sustains the fact that this incident was a divine work of God.

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NEW TESTAMENT CHRONOLOGY

AND THE DECREE OF DANIEL 9

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According to the angel Gabriel, the seventy weeks of years mentioned in Daniel 9:24-27 would begin with the issuance of a commandment or decree to restore and to build Jerusalem. The first sixty-nine of these weeks (483 years) would end during the life of Messiah, and sometime after their end Messiah would be "cut off" or put to death.

Most Dispensationalists have concluded that the decree which began the seventy weeks historically was King Artaxerxes' decree issued to Nehemiah in 445 B.C. If this decree is to be accepted as the fulfillment of Daniel 9, then it must be demonstrated that 483 years from 445 B.C. ended during the life of Christ and before His death. The only way in which that can be demonstrated is through the chronological data relating to the life of Christ which are given in the New Testament. This study, then, is dealing with the following question: does the New Testament confirm the conclusion that Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah in 445 B.C. was the starting point of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9?

It is crucial to note again at the outset that the first 483 years (sixty-nine weeks) of the seventy weeks was to end before Christ was put to death. That would mean, then, that the latest possible time in which that period could end was the year in which Christ died. If 483 years from 445 B.C. goes to a time later than the year in which Christ died, then Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah would have to be rejected as the fulfillment of Daniel 9. It is very crucial, then, that we try to determine the year in which Christ died. The traditional view has been that Christ was crucified in 30 A.D. But, when prophetic years are used, 483 years from 445 B.C. brings time to 32 A.D.¹ Is it possible to place the death of Christ as late as 32 A.D.? In order to determine that, it will be necessary to investigate New Testament chronological data relating to several events in the life of Christ.

First, we must try to determine when Christ was born. The gospels make it evident that He was born while Herod the Great was living. We know that Herod died late in March or early in April, 4 B.C.² Thus, Christ

had to have been born before that time. Most scholars narrow the date down to 6 to 4 B. C. Finegan, following what he feels to be the best old sources, places the birth in midwinter of 5-4 B. C.--either December, 5 B. C., or January 4 B. C.³

Second, we must try to determine when Christ was baptized and began His public ministry. Inasmuch as Christ was approximately six months younger than John the Baptist, it would be logical to assume that He began His ministry about six months after John began his (Lk. 1:36). According to Luke 3:1, John began his ministry in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar. At first glance one would assume that it would be a very simple matter to determine exactly the time span covered by the fifteenth year of Tiberius. But such is not the case. Finegan demonstrated how there are sixteen different time spans that could possibly have been that fifteenth year.⁴ The reasons for so many possibilities are such variables as the choice between regnal or non-regnal years, Julian or non-Julian calendars, accession or non-accession year systems and 12 A.D. or 14 A.D. as the starting point of Tiberius' reign. The earliest possible time span that could have been the fifteenth year was January 1 to December 31, 26 A.D. The latest possible span was March-April, 29 A.D. to March-April, 30 A.D.⁵

In trying to determine which of the sixteen possibilities was the most likely, the first crucial thing to settle is the time when Tiberius began to reign. Augustus served as emperor until 14 A.D., but he had appointed Tiberius to be his second in command in 12 A.D. When Augustus died on August 19, 14 A.D., Tiberius succeeded him as emperor either on that date or on September 17, 14 A.D.⁶ Now the question is: is Tiberius' reign to be reckoned from his appointment as second in command in 12 A.D., or from his becoming emperor in 14 A.D.? Those who hold to the traditional view that Christ was crucified in 30 A.D. choose the 12 A.D. date. This would mean that John would have begun his ministry in the Spring and Christ in the Fall of 26 A.D. But, Tacitus and Suetonius, two Roman historians who lived during the first and second centuries, recorded information about Tiberius that rules out the 12 A.D. date. They stated that Tiberius was not joint emperor with Augustus from 12 to 14 A.D.; instead, he was associated with Augustus only in respect of the provinces and armies (Suetonius, Tiberius xxi; Tacitus, Ann. i.3.3; compare i.11.2 and iii.56.2). Tacitus also made it clear that, when Augustus died, "Tiberius was not regarded by himself or by others as already Emperor" (Ann. i.5-7). Suetonius supported this by stating that, for a time after Augustus' death, Tiberius refused the Roman senate's offer of the imperial office (Tib. xxiv.). In addition to this, "No instance is known of reckoning the reign of Tiberius from his association with Augustus." Some coins from Antioch which supposedly did so reckon have been shown by Eckhel not to be genuine. There are genuine coins from Antioch that date the reign of Tiberius from

Augustus' death (note: Antioch was Luke's home town, so Luke would be prone to use 14 A.D. as the starting point).⁷ Josephus, the Jewish historian of the first century A.D., followed the 14 A.D. date.⁸ So did Sir William Ramsay, G. Ogg and A. R. Burn.^{9,10,11} Finegan also saw this date as being more probable than 12 A.D.¹² It is the opinion of this study, then, that Tiberius' reign began in 14 A.D.

With 14 A.D. as the starting point, the fifteenth year of Tiberius' reign would have been either in (1) 28 A.D. or (2) 29 A.D. or (3) in part of 28 and part of 29 A.D., depending upon whether the accession or non-accession system was used, and whether the Julian or non-Julian calendar was used.¹³ When these three possibilities are studied thoroughly, it is seen that two out of the three choose 28 A.D. as the year in which both John and Christ began their ministries.¹⁴ G. Ogg and Will Durant agreed with the 28 A.D. date.^{15,16} Later it will be seen that other chronological data in the gospel records fit well with this date.

Because of the extreme heat in the Jordan depression during the summer, it is likely that John performed the major part of his ministry there during spring and fall.¹⁷ Statements that he made near the beginning of his ministry may indicate that he began that ministry in the spring. Such a statement as: "And even now the axe also lieth at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire" would point to the month of April. Fruit trees were pruned in March; thus, by April it would become evident which trees were no longer productive and needed to be cut down. The statement: "whose fan is in his hand, thoroughly to cleanse his threshingfloor, and to gather the wheat into his garner," points to the harvest season. In the deep hot valley of the Jordan the harvest season came early--in June.¹⁸

Since great crowds had been attracted to John before Jesus came to him (Mark 1:5), and since Christ was six months younger than John, it is probable that Christ was baptized and began His ministry in the late fall season.¹⁹ This would mean that Christ began His ministry in the fall of 28 A.D. Epiphanius, a bishop on Cyprus during the fourth and fifth centuries, declared that Christ was baptized in November of 28 A.D.²⁰ It is the conclusion of this study that Christ was baptized and began His ministry in the late fall of 28 A.D.

The third New Testament chronological datum which must be investigated is that which is found in Luke 3:23. This verse deals with the age of Christ when He was baptized and began His ministry. The King James Version translates the verse as follows: "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, . . ." This translation gives the impression that Jesus was not quite thirty when baptized, but that He would be thirty on His next birthday. Upon this basis some who follow the tradition that Christ

died in 30 A.D. construct the following chronology: Christ was born perhaps in December, 5 B.C. In the fall (perhaps November) of 26 A.D. Christ was baptized and began His ministry. This would mean that He was twenty-nine years old when baptized and would become thirty in just another month or so. Over three years later, He was crucified in 30 A.D. when thirty-three years old.²¹

The above chronological scheme falls together very well, but there is one big problem with it: it is based upon an incorrect translation of Luke 3:23. Plummer pointed out that the King James translation of this verse "is impossible" in light of the Greek text. Cranmer led the way in this mistaken translation in the Bible of 1539, and the later versions followed it. According to Plummer, the proper translation is: "'Jesus himself was about thirty years of age when He began.'"²²

Alford said the verse should be translated: "'Jesus was about thirty years old when He began' (His ministry); not, 'began to be about,' & c., which is ungrammatical."²³

A. T. Robertson wrote that the translation "'began to be about thirty years of age,' is an impossible translation."²⁴

The incorrect King James translation indicates that Christ was under thirty when baptized, but the correct translation also leaves room for Christ to have been over thirty when baptized. Indeed, Alford went so far as to say that the expression "about thirty" allowed latitude "only in one direction; viz. over thirty years. He could not well be under, seeing that this was the appointed age for the commencement of public service of God by the Levites: see Num. iv. 3, 23, 43, 47."²⁵

How much time can be read into the word "about"? Those who hold the traditional view say that very little time can be read into it. They interpret the word in a narrow, more exact sense, indicating that it means that Christ was only a month or so under thirty and that He would be exactly thirty on His next birthday. But, in contrast to this view, Plummer wrote: "It is obvious that this verse renders little help to chronology. 'About thirty' may be anything from twenty-eight to thirty-two, --to give no wider margin."²⁶

Nicoll stated that the term "about" means: "about, nearly, implying that the date is only approximate. It cannot be used as a fixed datum for chronological purposes. . . ."²⁷

A. T. Robertson expressed it this way:

Luke does not commit himself definitely to precisely thirty years as the age of Christ. The Levites entered upon full service at that age, but that proves nothing about Jesus. God's prophets enter upon their task when the word of God comes to them. Jesus may have been a few months under or over thirty or a year or two less or more.²⁸

It is legitimate, then, to interpret the word "about" in a more broad, less exact sense than does the traditional view. Indeed, the broader interpretation may be the preferred one.

Our conclusion on Luke 3:23, then, is this: when Christ was baptized, He may have been as much as thirty-two years of age. If Christ was born near the end of 5 B.C. and baptized in the fall of 28 A.D., then He would have been thirty-one when baptized and would have been approaching His thirty-second birthday.²⁹

The fourth New Testament chronological datum which must be investigated is that which is found in John 2:20. During the first Passover of Christ's ministry (John 2:11-13), Christ cleansed the Temple in Jerusalem.³⁰ When the Jews demanded from Him a sign to substantiate His authority for this cleansing action, Christ said: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

Thinking that Jesus referred to the Temple that He had cleansed, the Jews replied: "Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou raise it up in three days?"

Many historians agree that Herod's Temple was not finally completed until 64 A.D.³¹ In the light of this, the Jews' statement in John 2:20 meant that, at the time of their statement, Herod's Temple was in the forty-sixth year of its building. If we could determine when Herod began his Temple, we could also determine the year in which the Jews made the statement in John 2:20. This in turn would help us determine when Christ was baptized and began His ministry.

According to Josephus (Antiquities xv), Herod "undertook to build" his Temple in the eighteenth year of his reign.³² Herod began to reign in 37 B.C., so his eighteenth year would have been 20 or 19 B.C.^{33,34} On the basis of Josephus' statement, those who hold the traditional view that Christ died in 30 A.D. conclude that Herod actually began to build the Temple in 20 B.C. Forty-six years from 20 B.C. would bring one to 27

A.D. According to their way of reckoning, Christ was baptized in the fall of 26 A.D. Thus, the first Passover of Christ's ministry (when the statement of John 2:20 was made) would have been in the spring of 27 A.D.

Once again the traditional chronological scheme works out very well; however, once again there is a problem with it. Exactly what did Josephus mean when he wrote that Herod "undertook to build" his temple in the eighteenth year of his reign? Did he mean, as the traditionalists conclude, that Herod actually began to build in that year? Or did he mean that Herod began to lay plans and to make preparations in that year? There is a big difference between the two. Josephus' language could very well mean the latter.

As a result of his research, Caldecott concluded that two years were spent in preparation for building the Temple. Actual building began in 18 B.C. after:

A thousand priests had been taught to be masons and carpenters; and thousands of sacerdotal garments had been got ready for them; ten thousand skilled workmen had also been chosen, nine hundred of whom had been working in the quarries and forests to procure great blocks of stone that were white and strong, and timber in abundance; a thousand wagons had transported the necessary new material to the spot. . . .³⁵

Ogg also concluded that Herod spent a couple years in preparation before actual building began.³⁶ It is our conclusion that Herod actually began to build the Temple in 18 B.C.

Forty-six years from 18 B.C. would bring one to 29 A.D. According to our way of reckoning, Christ was baptized in the fall of 28 A.D. Thus, the first Passover of Christ's ministry (when the statement of John 2:20 was made) would have been in the spring of 29 A.D. From this it can be seen that the statement in John 2:20 substantiates very well our earlier conclusion that Christ was baptized in 28 A.D.

The fifth New Testament chronological datum which must be investigated concerns the length of Christ's earthly ministry in His first coming. The only way that that can be determined with any degree of accuracy is by searching the gospel records to see how many Passovers were observed during Christ's ministry. The synoptic gospels mention only one Passover--the final one during which Christ was crucified (Mark 14:12; Matt. 26:17; Luke 22:7).³⁷ On this basis one might conclude that Christ's ministry lasted only one year or less. But Irenaeus blasted such

an idea in his work Against Heresies.³⁸ This may indicate that the early church considered the ministry to have lasted longer than one year.

In addition, another synoptic passage (Mark 2:23; Matt. 12:1; Luke 6:1) seems to refer to another springtime prior to the final one (the disciples plucked grain during the spring harvest season). This would mean a second Passover in Christ's ministry. "Since the baptism (Mk. 1:9) was obviously prior to that, perhaps in the preceding fall, the total ministry was at least somewhat over one year in length."³⁹

Inasmuch as the synoptic gospels may have allowed one Passover to go unmentioned, it could very well be that they allowed other Passovers to go unmentioned. Another possibility is that the synoptic records may have covered only a part of a longer ministry--the part deemed most important. Thus, Christ's ministry may have been several years in length.⁴⁰

The Gospel of John mentions three Passovers (John 2:13; 6:4; 11:55). John 4:35 may imply a fourth. In that verse Jesus referred to a harvest (April or May) which was four months away. That would mean that He made His statement around January or February. In between the time of the statement and the time of the harvest a second unmentioned Passover would have fallen. This would make a total of four Passovers during Christ's ministry.⁴¹ With Jesus having been baptized and having begun His ministry in the fall preceding the first Passover "it seems that a total ministry of three years plus a number of months is indicated." Epiphanius considered the ministry to have lasted three years plus several months. Eusebius seemed to hold the same.⁴² Most conservative Bible scholars today seem to agree with this. It is the conclusion of this study that Christ's earthly ministry lasted three years and several months--perhaps about three and one-half years.

When traditionalists, who believe that Christ began His ministry in the fall of 26 A.D., apply this three and one-half years to their chronological scheme, they end with Spring of 30 A.D. as the time of Christ's death. When this study, which believes that Christ began His ministry in the fall of 28 A.D., applies this three and one-half years to its chronological scheme, it ends with Spring of 32 A.D. as the time of Christ's death. In the fourth century A.D. Bishop Epiphanius also concluded that Christ died in Spring, 32 A.D.⁴³

Earlier in this chapter we asked the following question: is it possible to place the death of Christ as late as 32 A.D.? Our reason for having asked that question was found in two simple facts. First, if 483 years from 445 B.C. goes to a time later than the year in which Christ died, then Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah would have to be rejected as the fulfillment of Daniel 9. Second, when prophetic years are used, 483 years from 445 B.C. brings the time to 32 A.D.

Our investigation of the New Testament chronological data relating to the life of Christ has demonstrated that it is possible to place the death of Christ as late as 32 A.D. Thus, both the death of Christ and the end of the period of 483 years which began in 445 B.C. could have taken place in the same year.

Sir Robert Anderson has demonstrated how, since Artaxerxes issued his decree to Nehemiah in the month of Nisan, 445 B.C. (Neh. 2:1), 483 prophetic years from that time ended in the month of Nisan, 32 A.D.⁴⁴ It is evident that Christ died in the month of Nisan, for that's when the Jewish Passover was observed. Thus, the period of 483 years that began in 445 B.C. could have ended in the same month that Christ died. This would mean that that period of 483 years not only did not end in a year later than Christ's death, but also did not end in a month later than Christ's death.

Could the period of 483 years have ended on some day later than the day on which Christ died? Perhaps an examination of some chronological data in Ezra and Nehemiah will help us answer this question. Ezra 7:9 indicates that it took Ezra from Nisan 1 to Ab 1, 458 B.C., to travel from Babylon to Jerusalem. Within this period was a three day holdover near Ahava (8:15, 31). In other words it took Ezra three days less than four full months to travel from Babylon to Jerusalem.

According to Nehemiah 6:15, the Jews finished rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem on Elul 25, 445 B.C., fifty-two days after they had begun. This means that they began rebuilding the walls on Ab 3 or 4, the day that Nehemiah confronted the Jewish leaders with the task of rebuilding (Neh. 2:17). According to Nehemiah 2:11, Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem three days before Ab 3 or 4, or on Ab 1 or 2 (note: this was almost on the same day of the same month that Ezra arrived in Jerusalem thirteen years earlier). If Nehemiah's journey to Jerusalem took as long as did Ezra's, then Nehemiah started his journey somewhere around Nisan 3 or 4, 445 B.C.

Someone might argue that Nehemiah's journey would not have taken as long as Ezra's, because Nehemiah didn't have women and children with him as did Ezra. However, it is very probable that Nehemiah did have women and children with him on his journey, for several times he mentioned his servants who had come with him (Neh. 4:16, 23; 5:10, 16). Surely some, if not many, of these men had wives and children. He also mentioned his "brethren" in the same passages. This term probably refers to his kinsmen and the members of his house who had come with him.⁴⁵ Here again, women and children must have been involved.

Even if Nehemiah had not had women and children with him, his journey probably would have taken as long as Ezra's, for he had a longer

distance to travel than did Ezra. Ezra began his journey at Babylon, but Nehemiah began his at Shushan (Neh. 1:1), which was approximately 200 miles further from Jerusalem than was Babylon.⁴⁶ Thus, we still conclude that Nehemiah began his journey around Nisan 3 or 4, 445 B.C.

It is extremely improbable that Nehemiah left on the same day that Artaxerxes gave his approval for him to go. Certainly it would have taken several days to make preparations for such a long journey. Because of this, it is our conclusion that Artaxerxes issued his decree to Nehemiah around Nisan 1. Schultz also concluded that the king took this action on Nisan 1, and that the preparation and journey took about four months.⁴⁷

Sir Robert Anderson has shown how that 483 prophetic years which began on Nisan 1, 445 B.C., ended on Nisan 10, 32 A.D.⁴⁸ Most scholars are agreed that Christ was crucified either on Nisan 14 or 15. Therefore, the period of 483 years which began with the issuance of Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah did not end on some day later than the day on which Christ died. It ended several days before Christ died--perhaps on the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem.⁴⁹

In this study it has been demonstrated that the 483 years that began with the issuance of Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah in 445 B.C. ended during a very significant year in the life of Christ (the year of His death), and also ended before His death. It is our conclusion, then, that the New Testament does confirm the concept that Artaxerxes' decree to Nehemiah was the historic starting point of the seventy weeks of Daniel 9.

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BOOK REVIEWS

UNDERSTANDING REVELATION. By Gary G. Cohen. Christian Beacon Press, Collingswood, N.J., 1968. 186 pp. \$1.00, paper.

This is not a commentary on Revelation but rather a comprehensive study of the chronology of its contents. It is the essence of the author's Th.D. dissertation at Grace Theological Seminary. Dr. Cohen is professor of New Testament at Faith Theological Seminary.

The author introduces his study with a brief consideration of six different approaches to the interpretation of Revelation and accepts the futuristic approach, holding that Revelation 4-19 will be fulfilled in the yet future seven year period of tribulation. He accepts a pre-tribulational rapture. The letters to the seven churches are accepted as historical and representative, and then the further tentative conclusion is reached that these seven churches are also prophetic of seven periods of church history.

He holds that chronologically chapters 4-5 stand at the opening of the seven year tribulation period. He finds that the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven bowls form a chronological framework for the book, each series itself as well as the three series in relation to each other are chronologically successive. But the insets inserted into this chronological framework are not necessarily strictly chronological but inserted at the proper time to give a fuller picture of the period. Chapter 20 covers the millennium and chapters 21-22 relate to the eternal state. Several chronological charts help to visualize the author's position.

The author generally makes a good case for his position. It is recommended as a clear, reasoned presentation of the position espoused.

D. Edmond Hiebert

Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary

TINDER IN TABASCO. By Charles Bennett. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1968. 213 pp. \$2.95, paper.

Tinder in Tabasco is the most recent addition to the list of books on Church growth, but it is much more than a mere study on growth. It is

a rather complete history of missionary work in that southern part of Mexico just next to the Yucatan Peninsula and Guatemala.

Out of a desire to avoid superficiality, the author has presented details of Tabasco's secular history, during the modern missionary period, which have had a direct influence on the ecclesiastical situation. He mentions specific political and religious events and personalities.

The book centers around the activities of the National Presbyterian Church in Tabasco, but information is also included about other denominations working in that area.

As to missionary strategy, Mr. Bennett pointed out the relative value of different types of methods, but was not as definite as he might have been in indicating weaknesses in some procedures used. Not all methods used there could be enthusiastically endorsed by evangelicals.

It is regrettable that the author felt constrained to include the Seventh-Day Adventist Church among the evangelicals.

This well-written and fact-filled book will be of great help to evangelical leaders interested in missions.

P. Fredrick Fogle

Grace Theological Seminary

AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE. By Herschel H. Hobbs. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1966. 355 pp. \$6.95.

The minister or teacher who is searching for seed thoughts on the Gospel of Luke need seek no farther. This book by Herschel H. Hobbs, pastor of the First Baptist Church (Southern) in Oklahoma City, abounds in suggestions and rich values for many sermons. Nestle is the basic text on the Greek references. The author's enlightening and thought-provoking use of Greek verb tenses and prepositions is an outstanding feature of this book. In a day of denial of the cardinal doctrines, his defense of the Virgin Birth is refreshing. His historical references are unburdensome and helpful. Some of the most informative facts disclosed by the author are on the publicans, sabbath, blasphemy of the Holy Spirit and the order of the synagogue services.

This commentary has very few footnotes and a limited number of quotes. Only one of the fourteen total footnotes refers to another work other than that of Hobbs. His outline is in ten sections and not strictly by the

chapter divisions of Luke. Dr. Hobbs suggests twelve basic volumes for source material and of this number, four are his own works. This book is a development of passage ideas rather than a verse-by-verse commentary. Dr. Hobbs is not one to avoid problematic verses or ideas. He gives workable solutions to many problems in Luke.

Some interesting ideas are expressed by Dr. Hobbs. Herod's brother, Philip (Lk. 3:19; cf. 3:1), was a relative in Rome. Those who would not see death but remain to see the kingdom (9:27) would actually persist until Jerusalem's destruction. The generation seeing the "shooting" fig tree would also see this destruction. The author follows postmillennarian Plummer concerning the "times of the Gentiles" as Gentile inheritance of Jewish blessings.

Dr. Hobbs cites several authors who are neither included in his source material nor given titles to their works (e.g., Ragg, Godet, Juvenal, Field). His book arrangement is attractive, but he could rearrange or eliminate at least seventy-five pages to cut the book cost. In the reviewer's copy, pages 97-128 are a different shade of white paper than the color of the remainder of the book.

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THE BOOK OF MICAH. By T. Miles Bennett. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1968. 75 pp. \$1.75, paper.

The outstanding characteristic of this work is the writer's defense of the unity of the book of Micah. The disappointing feature lies in the author's weak treatment of the future promises to the nation Israel. Part of the Shield Bible Study Outlines, this manual would be more interesting if a stronger application were made to our current times.

T. Miles Bennett, Professor of Old Testament at Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, Fort Worth, Texas, extracts key phrases from some of the verses of Micah (ASV) for expository comments. He expresses the overall thoughts of the prophet rather than the details. In several places, Dr. Bennett stresses that the mission of the Old Testament prophet was more of a "forth-teller" than a foreteller. In general, the prophet's message was for his own day or the immediate future. Thus, the promised cleansing and glorious future of Israel are primarily fulfilled

in post-exilic days. Even when the prophet speaks of a future deliverer (Mic. 5:2), his words are colored by his knowledge of King David and his descendants.

The introduction of the manual contains some interesting historical facts. Except for minor changes, the two outlines of the book (pp. 9, 16) are repetitious. The exposition of the text enlightens the readers on some customs and actions which were contemporary in the prophet's day. This work is almost free of footnotes and the few quotes are from authors other than the ten men noted in the bibliography. According to the author, the difficult proper names of Micah 1:10-16 show considerable alterations in the text by scribes and copyists. The word "peace" is misspelled on page 33.

James H. Gabhart

Community Church
Tiptecanoe, Indiana

WINNING A HEARING. An Introduction to Missionary Anthropology and Linguistics. By Howard W. Law. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., Grand Rapids, 1968. 162 pp. \$3.95.

Dr. Howard Law is one of the few evangelicals who has made a serious contribution to the field of anthropology. Holding the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics and having taught courses in linguistics and anthropology, he is well qualified to do so.

It is refreshing to note how carefully he makes his statements on subjects which overlap the theological and scientific realms and he has shown that there is a healthy balance between scientific research and Biblical revelation.

After dealing with a few basic definitions in his introduction, the author divides his work into three main sections: 1) Culture as Nonverbal Behavior, 2) Culture as Language and Communication, and 3) Culture as Changing Behavior. The first includes some historical background, race and cultural development, material and social culture and a consideration of ideology and cultural values. The second which concerns linguistics discusses phonetics, phonemics, morphemics, tagmemics and lexical structure, and provides exercises in the descriptive analysis of languages. The third is a discussion of the important matter of the changing aspects of culture. Understanding these helps the Christian worker to adapt to an alien culture and win a hearing.

It is the opinion of this reviewer that the author, in writing the book primarily for the layman, has fallen short of his goal. The principle of introducing the non-missionary to what a missionary does is excellent, but with the exception of the well-educated, this book would be too technical for a layman, especially the section on linguistics. It would be difficult to assimilate without a qualified teacher. On the other hand, Dr. Law claims that Winning a Hearing is no more than an introduction for students planning on doing missionary work, and in this he has done an excellent piece of work, in spite of the book's brevity.

It is hoped that this book will be a stepping-stone to more extensive works in the field of anthropology, written by Dr. Law or others from an evangelical and scholarly vantage point.

P. Fredrick Fogle

Grace Theological Seminary

A GENERAL INTRODUCTION TO THE BIBLE. By Norman L. Geisler and William E. Nix. Moody Press, Chicago, 1968. 488 pp. \$6.95.

If one desires to investigate the Bible from the external evidences for it, and gain an understanding of how, when, and under what conditions it was written, here is a most excellent and readable work. There have been many books written on this subject, but in this volume the authors have updated a vast amount of material on the inspiration, canonicity, transmission, text, and translation of the whole Bible. There is a wealth of well documented background material to the Bible, from a conservative viewpoint.

This book holds to a high view of inspiration and the conclusion of the authors is that "the sixty-six books of the Protestant Bible known today are the entire and complete canon of inspired scripture, handed down through the centuries without substantial change or any doctrinal variation" (p. 447). It is refreshing in this day and age, when the foundation of Christianity, i.e. the Bible, is systematically being attacked, to find a current book that is predicated upon this thesis. That Geisler and Nix hold to the verbal, plenary inspiration of the Bible, would in itself commend the book.

There are three divisions to the book. Part one handles the problem of inspiration. Definitions are stated, claims for inspiration are set forth, and supporting evidence for these claims are well outlined. Part two considers the canonization of the Bible. The criteria by which books were admitted into the Bible laid down, the development of the canon in its historical approach is stated, and a consideration of the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha

is discussed. Part three tells how we got our Bible and also notes the various modern translations with an evaluation of each.

The book has twenty-seven illustrations which enhance its value. There is also a short but adequate glossary of terms used in the book as an aid to understanding the semantics of the subject. Included is an up-to-date bibliography, an author index, a subject index, and a Scripture index.

There is no doubt, but that this book will find wide acceptance in Christian schools for its academic level, yet it can be easily read by any Christian with profit. The reviewer would heartily recommend it to every Christian who desires to know more about the Bible.

John H. Stoll

Grace College

BOOKS RECEIVED

- IS GOD NECESSARY? By Larry Richards. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969. 160 pp. \$1.95, paper.
- JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD. By John F. Walvoord. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969. 318 pp. \$4.95.
- JESUS WHY? By Richard R. Caemmerer. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Mo., 1969. 93 pp. \$1.95, paper.
- SIMPLE SERMONS ON PRAYER. By W. Herschel Ford. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 88 pp. \$2.95.
- DAY BY DAY WITH ANDREW MURRAY. Compiled by M. J. Shepperson. Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1969 (reprint). 119 pp. \$1.25, paper.
- STUDIES IN ACTS: BIBLE SELF-STUDY SERIES. Arranged by Grace Saxe and revised by Irving L. Jensen. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969. 194 pp. \$.95, paper.
- HERE'S YOUR ANSWER. By Robert J. Little. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969 (5th ed.). 220 pp. \$3.95.

- PLAIN TALK ON JAMES. By Manford George Gutzke. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 189 pp. \$1.95, paper.
- ROZELL'S COMPLETE LESSONS FOR 1970. Brooks Ramsey, editor. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 320 pp. \$3.50.
- GROW TOWARD LEADERSHIP. By Melvin L. Hodges. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969 (revised ed.). 63 pp. \$.95, paper.
- ZECHARIAH. By G. Coleman Luck. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969 (revised ed.). 128 pp. \$.95, paper.
- ROMANS. By Geoffrey B. Wilson. The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1969. 255 pp. \$1.25, paper.
- THE BOOK OF OBADIAH. By Don W. Hillis. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1968. 75 pp. \$1.95, paper.
- CHATS FROM A MINISTER'S LIBRARY. By Wilbur M. Smith. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1951. 283 pp. \$2.95.
- BY LIFE OR BY DEATH. By James C. Hefley. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 208 pp. \$4.95.
- THE GOD-PLAYERS. By Earl Jabay. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 151 pp. \$3.95.
- DRY BONES CAN LIVE AGAIN. By Robert E. Coleman. Fleming H. Revell Company, Old Tappan, New Jersey, 1969. 127 pp. \$1.25, paper.
- COMMUNISM AND THE REALITY OF MORAL LAW. By James D. Bales. Craig Press, Nutley, New Jersey, 1969. 201 pp. \$3.75, paper.
- COMMUNISM VERSUS CREATION. By Francis Nigel Lee. Craig Press, Nutley, N.J., 1969. 252 pp. \$3.95, paper.
- THE LOG COLLEGE. By Archibald Alexander. The Banner of Truth Trust, London, 1969. 251 pp. \$4.00.
- HAPPY MOMENTS WITH GOD. By Margaret Anderson. Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, 1969 (reprint). 186 pp.
- THE HIDDEN LIFE OF PRAYER. By D. M. M'Intyre. Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Dimension Books, Minneapolis, 1969 (reprint). 94 pp. \$.75, paper.
- EXPOSITION OF ISAIAH. Volume I. By H. C. Leupold. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1968. 598 pp. \$7.95.
- EXPERIENCES. By Arnold Toynbee. Oxford University Press, New York, 1969. 417 pp. \$8.75.
- EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN. By Herschel H. Hobbs. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1968. 207 pp. \$6.95.
- M. R. DeHAAN: THE MAN AND HIS MINISTRY. By James R. Adair. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 160 pp. \$1, paper.
- WHERE IS HISTORY GOING? By John Warwick Montgomery. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 250 pp. \$5.95.
- BEYOND THE SHADOWS. By Eileen Mitson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1968. 128 pp. \$1.50, paper.
- THE URBAN CRISIS. Edited by David McKenna. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 146 pp. \$3.95.
- THE PROPHECY OF EZEKIEL. By Charles Lee Feinberg. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969. 286 pp. \$4.95.

- THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHURCH. By S. M. Lockridge. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 64 pp.
- NEW EVERY MORNING. By Philip E. Howard, Jr. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 187 pp. \$3.95.
- LEARNING FOR LOVING. By Robert McFarland and John Burton. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 158 pp. \$3.95.
- LIVING THE CHRIST-FILLED LIFE. By John E. Hunter. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 130 pp. \$2.95.
- THE ESSENCE OF MARRIAGE. By J. A. Fritze. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 124 pp.
- THE VACUUM OF UNBELIEF. By Stuart Barton Babbage. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 152 pp. \$3.95.
- A SCIENTIST AND HIS FAITH. By Gordon L. Glegg. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 59 pp. \$1.50, paper.
- JOHN THE BAPTIST AS WITNESS AND MARTYR. By Marcus L. Loane. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1968. 122 pp.
- PURPLE-VIOLET SQUISH. By David Wilkerson. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 152 pp. \$2.95.
- GUIDING TEEN-AGERS TO MATURITY. By J. H. Waterink. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 144 pp. \$3.50.
- NOT MADE FOR DEFEAT. By Douglas Hall. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 192 pp. \$1.95, paper.
- STUDIES IN THE LIFE OF CHRIST. By Irving L. Jensen. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969. 112 pp. \$.95, paper.
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- ENJOY YOUR BIBLE. By Irving L. Jensen. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969. 127 pp. \$.50, paper.
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- FACING THE ISSUE. By William J. Krutza and Phillip Di Cicco. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 119 pp. \$1.25, paper.
- CONQUEST AND CRISIS. By John J. Davis. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 176 pp. \$2.95, paper.
- CONFLICT AND HARMONY IN SCIENCE AND THE BIBLE. By Jack Wood Sears. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 97 pp. \$1.95, paper.



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THE INTERPRETATION OF PARABLES

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The striking importance of the parabolic method of teaching in Jewish thinking can be seen from this passage in the Apocrypha:

But he that giveth his mind to the law of the most High, and is occupied in the meditation thereof, will seek out the wisdom of all the ancient, and be occupied in prophecies. He will keep the sayings of the renowned men: and where subtil parables are, he will be there also. He will seek out the secrets of grave sentences, and be conversant in dark parables (Eccles. 39:1-3).

Our Lord made ready use of the parabolic method of teaching to the extent that Mark comments, "But without a parable spake he not unto them" (4:34). The parables are not mere human tales; they are teachings of the Son of God, the One to whom the crowd listened gladly (Mk. 12:37). Of Him it is declared, ". . . the people were astonished at his doctrine: for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes" (Matt. 7:28, 29). Of the parables, Armstrong writes:

Indeed, they are sparks from that fire which our Lord brought to the earth (Lk. xii. 49)--the message of One who was 'a prophet. . . and more than a prophet' (Mt. xi. 9; Lk. vii. 16).¹

Christ's parables are not of mere man. Their higher quality is evidenced by deep earnestness and the lack, yea, total absence of jesting or folly.

By a consideration of the great number of parables, one can note the importance of them in Christ's ministry. Ramm has written, "The importance of the study of the parables is to be found in their sheer number representing a large part of the text of the Gospels."² And he further makes an important observation, "Any doctrine of the kingdom or eschatology which ignores a careful study of the parables cannot be adequate."³

The individual parables have been interpreted in many diverse ways, from the extreme allegorical method of Augustine to the topical method of Chrysostom. Hubbard vividly states, "They have been made the stalking-horse for all kinds of false doctrine and not a little sheer nonsense besides."⁴

It is necessary, therefore, to determine hermeneutical principles for the uncovering of Biblical truth contained in the parables.

WHAT IS A PARABLE?

The definition often learned by Sunday School children is, "A parable is an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." This, though true, needs further clarification.

In the Authorized Version "parable" is a translation used of three different terms. The Hebrew word is mashal meaning "a proverbial saying" (1 Sam. 10:12; 24:14), "a prophetic figurative discourse" (Num. 23:7), "a similitude" or "parable" (Ezek. 17:2), "a poem" (Ps. 49:4), or "a riddle" (Ezek. 17:2).⁵ In the New Testament the word is a translation of two Greek terms parabolē and paroimia. The former is used in the sense of "symbol" or "type" (Heb. 9:9; 11:19), and it is used in the Synoptics to denote "a characteristic form of the teaching of Jesus,"⁶ and the latter word is used by John (Jn. 10:6) as "dark saying" or "figure of speech" and by Peter (2 Pet. 2:22) as "proverb."

The importance of a definition, and the confusion at this point, can be noted by the varied lists of parables that are assembled. Moulton relates that scholars have made lists varying from 33 to 79 parables.⁷ He concludes, "This divergence of opinion makes it evident that it is not easy to determine the precise extent of the parabolic material."⁸ Standard listings contain about thirty. A. B. Bruce lists 33 parables and eight parable-germs,⁹ and Trench gives 30.¹⁰

In our thinking, the word "parable" generally brings to mind the longer stories of Jesus. Therefore it is well, at this point, to distinguish between parable, allegory, simile, and metaphor.

A metaphor equates one object or person with the other. For instance, John's Gospel contains no parables, in the usual sense, but it gives many metaphors of our Lord, such as, "I am the good shepherd" (10:11) and "I am the true vine" (15:1).

A simile does not equate the two, but it does draw out a comparison. Straton writes, "A simile says that one thing is not another but like

another."¹¹ An example is, "But whereunto shall I liken this generation? It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling to their fellows..." (Matt. 11:16ff). The simile and parable are very close together in a parable such as, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took. . ." (Matt. 13:33). This may be called a parabolic similitude, or an extended simile, though Smith points up the problem of endeavoring to split hairs at this point:

If the illustration of the Mustard Seed is a similitude in Mark, are we to class it as a parable in its Lukan form? And if so, where shall we place Matthew's version of it, which stands half-way between the two?¹²

One further form is the allegory. An allegory is a story where every point is important. The classic illustration is Bunyan's Pilgrim's Progress. A Biblical example is allegory in Galatians (4:22-31). This is perhaps pressing it too far, but Straton indicates that the Christian soldier in Ephesians (6:14 ff) is an allegory.¹³ Thus in an allegory every detail of the story has its counter-part; whereas, in a parable there is usually but one central truth. Terry makes this pertinent observation:

The parable is essentially a formal comparison, and requires its interpreter to go beyond its own narrative to bring in its meaning: the allegory is an extended metaphor, and contains its interpretation within itself.¹⁴

Thus for our purpose, a parable is a similitude or full-length story, true to nature and to life, a picture of something which can be observed in the world of our experience, which was told by our Lord to illustrate a divine truth.

THE PURPOSE FOR THE USE OF PARABLES

In order to draw a proper conclusion in the interpretation of the parables, it is first necessary to determine the reason for Christ's use of the parabolic method. The "Whereunto shall I liken it?" of Christ's teaching method is not without significance. Two specific reasons can be suggested; one a pedagogical, the other a historical one.

The Pedagogical Purpose for Parables

The value of illustration can scarcely be denied in proper teaching. A parable is an illustration. The term itself is from paraballō, "to cast along side." It is a story "cast along side" as an illustration. Several characteristics of the parabolic method of teaching can be noted.

They are Stories. Parables are pictorial, easily grasped, quickly remembered, and attention holders. Mark 4:1, 2 demonstrates this fact. A great multitude had gathered and He taught them by parables. The group stayed all day; finally in the evening they were sent away. It appears that the parabolic method was a good way of keeping their attention (cf. vs. 33-35). The story-telling method is a powerful means of imparting truth. The Lord made effective use of it.

Truths are Taught. It cannot correctly be said that unbelievers did not understand any of the parables. An example is the parable of the Wicked Husbandmen (Lk. 20:9-18). The parable was told to the people, in the presence of the chief priests, scribes, and elders who had questioned His authority to perform His mighty deeds. At the conclusion the chief priests and scribes sought to kill him "for they perceived that he had spoken this parable against them" (v. 19). Lenski makes an interesting observation at this point: "They realized that the parable was directed against them but did not realize that by their rage they were justifying that parable in its severest part."¹⁵

No doubt, the full implication of the parable, and certainly the prophetic utterance, they did not understand, but it was sufficiently clear for them to desire to kill Him.

Thus it is evident that unbelievers as well as believers were taught truths by means of parables.

They Unfold the Meaning of Scripture. One parable can be mentioned at this point. An inquirer questioned Christ concerning His understanding of "neighbor" as found in Leviticus 19:18. Christ responded by telling the parable of the Good Samaritan (Lk. 10:30-36). The parable clearly gives, in illustration form, the meaning of "neighbor."¹⁶ This parable was understood by an unbelieving lawyer who had come to challenge Christ, and the Lord told him to do even as he had understood the Samaritan to have done (v. 37). Geldenhuys writes, "Jesus' answer was so clear and challenging that the lawyer was compelled to acknowledge the deep truth conveyed by it."¹⁷ Thus the truth of Leviticus 19:18 is clearly taught by our Lord.

They Force the Hearer to Think. Though Moule misses the point of Mark 4:11, 12, his statement concerning those verses is worthy of consideration:

You cannot teach people by spoon-feeding: you must set them a puzzle to think out for themselves; those who start to crack it are getting somewhere. There is no short-cut to understanding.¹⁸

A liberal writes, "The parable is not so much a crutch for limping intellects as a spur to spiritual perception."¹⁹

An illustration of this purpose may be seen in the parable of the Two Debtors (Lk. 7:41, 42). Evidently Simon, to whom Jesus addressed this parable, was an unbeliever, but he was able to understand the meaning and respond to the question posed by Christ. Christ said, "Thou hast rightly judged" (v. 43). And in the words of A. B. Bruce:

Jesus looks at the woman now for the first time, and asks His host to look at her, the despised one, that he may learn a lesson from her, by a contrast to be drawn between her behavior and his own in application of the parable.²⁰

One of the most difficult parables of our Lord, the parable of the Unjust Steward (Lk. 16:1-9), closes with two searching questions (vss. 11, 12). It seems obvious that the questions appeal to the hearer to think that matter through and come to a conclusion.

The Historical Purpose for the Parables

It has been shown that some parables were given to illustrate a truth so that the hearers would grasp the meaning more readily. They were stories of common settings and close to the experience of the Palestinian people. But beyond this, when our Lord was asked why He spoke in parables He responded, "Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given" (Matt. 13:11; cf. Lk. 8:10; Mk. 4:11, 12). It would seem that Christ's teaching in parables did not come until His rejection by the nation of Israel was becoming clear, and He saw the need to speak in a manner understood by His true followers, but not understood by the mere curious or those who were hostile to His ministry. Bruce shows that there was a progression toward the parabolic method from beatitudes to metaphors and similes to parables.²¹ Matthew 12 is a turning point in the ministry of Christ. At this point the work of Christ has been attributed to Satan and the leaders of the people have turned their backs on Christ. Matthew 13 introduces the reader to the parables of the kingdom.²² The coming Inter-Regnum is being unfolded. At the close of the first parable, we are introduced to the purpose of the parabolic method. The truth was revealed to the followers of Christ, but through this method it was concealed to those who were not true believers.

The interpretation of Matthew 13:10-17, Mark 4:11 and Luke 8:10 has gone in many directions. The critical view is that it was an addition by the primitive church. Torrey writes on Matthew 13:14ff., "The extended

citation from Is. 6 (LXX) is an early insertion in the Greek Gospel."²³ Dodd explains that "this explanation of the purpose of the parables is an answer to the question which arose after the death of Jesus, and the failure of His followers to win the Jewish people."²⁴ He further states,

But that He desired not to be understood by the people in general, and therefore clothed His teaching in unintelligible forms, cannot be made credible on any reasonable reading of the Gospels.²⁵

Dodd clearly misses the idea of judicial blinding upon unbelieving Israel. Armstrong seems to take the ability of sound scholarship away from evangelicals when he writes, "This passage [Mark 4:11, 12]. . . has been interpreted in different ways by commentators, though it would be hard to find any authority who regarded it as a verbatim record."²⁶

Jeremias holds a view that is unacceptable, when he teaches:

. . . That v. 11 f. [Mark 4] is a logion belonging to wholly independent tradition, which was adapted to the word parabolai (v. 10-11), and must therefore be interpreted without reference to its present context.²⁷

It was, in his view, a possible saying of Christ, but out of context.

F. Hauck, in Kittel's Theological Dictionary, holds that these were actual words of Christ, but spoken at a later period in His ministry, and "obviously a distinction has to be made between the theology of Mk. and the original meaning and purpose of the preaching in parables."²⁸

Hunter summarizes the critical view well when he writes:

If the notorious verses in Mark 4:11 f. mean what, at first glance, they appear to mean--then Jesus deliberately used parables to hide God's truth from the masses and made them ripe for judgment--they cannot be words of Jesus (My own view is that they are genuine words but that they do not belong here).²⁹

Hauck expresses this view clearly, "The critical understanding sees in it a later construction which echoes the theology of the community rather than Jesus Himself."³⁰

This unbiblical view must be rejected and the verses accepted as a part of the original autographs. The inclusion of Christ's statement concerning His use of parables in the three Synoptics is significant.

How are we to understand this seeming judgment of closed ears and eyes to understand the parables? As has been noted, some reject it altogether, or say the writer added it as a true saying of Christ but completely out of context.

One can slide over the judicial pronouncement of Christ as Thompson has done:

These words are a little hard to understand at first, but the difficulty disappears when we observe that Jesus was quoting a passage from Isaiah, and that Isaiah was speaking ironically, putting the result as a purpose, as is done so often in Hebrew. Jesus also was speaking ironically.³¹

Or as Moule writes, "They will hear without hearing and see without seeing; otherwise--this is a bit of sarcasm, not meant to be taken in a solemnly literal way--they might actually repent!"³²

Another explanation has been suggested by some, proposing that the hina may rather be translated from the Aramaic as a relative pronoun.³³ As Wright says, it "may here be a mistranslation of the Aramaic particle di, which can be used to express purpose, but was here probably used as a relative pronoun."³⁴

Robertson accepts the words as written and draws this conclusion, "What is certain is that the use of parables on this occasion was a penalty for judicial blindness on those who will not see."³⁵ It seems clear that this is the only legitimate conclusion that can be drawn. Judicial blindness comes upon those who willfully refuse the gracious invitation for salvation. For obscurity and darkness of this kind, no amount of hermeneutical ability can bring clarity and light. "The wicked purpose of the obdurate not to believe and be saved God is eventually compelled to make also his purpose; that they shall not believe and be saved."³⁶

At this juncture a point must be made clear. The honest, believing inquirer was not shut out from understanding. Kirk makes this pertinent statement, "The Saviour explained to those who asked for explanation."³⁷ Certainly, the whole purpose of our Lord was to bring truth to light, to seek and to save that which was lost, to illumine and enlighten.

. . . The unreceptive and unworthy multitude stood self-condemned because of their rejection of the message of salvation. Teaching in parables is part of their just punishment, and serves also to keep the door open for those who may become receptive.³⁸

The hina clause of Mark and Luke and the hoti clause of Matthew point to judicial blinding. Mark and Luke view purpose and Matthew result. Haas writes, "Mark sees in actual occurrence what Matthew portrays as a result."³⁹ Jeremias quotes Bower, "In the case of divine decisions purpose and fulfillment are identical."⁴⁰ Notwithstanding differences in statement, the three accounts are in substantial agreement as to the purpose of the parabolic method at that time. Judicial blindness may seem harsh, but:

If we shrink sensitively from the idea that the 'Lord of heaven and earth' reveals to some and hides from others, we are strangely out of sympathy with the feelings of Jesus and of Paul, who found in this idea not only occasion of resignation, but of adoration and joy. ([Matt.] 11:25 f.; Rom. 9:18 ff; 11:30-36.)⁴¹

It is concluded that often the parables were meant to be examples and illustrations, demonstrating a truth which our Lord was emphasizing to believer or unbeliever. At other times (such as Matthew 13), the parables were a method of veiling the truth from those who would not believe. This was a judicial blinding upon the unbelieving. To those who asked, Christ gave the meaning of the veiled truths.

THE INTERPRETATION

The interpretation of parables is not an easy task. The multiplicity of interpretations testifies to this. Even those who walked daily with Christ had need of asking of Him the interpretation (Matt. 13:26). The interpretation Christ gave of several will help in understanding others.

It is self-evident that one's theological persuasion will also bear on his understanding of the meaning. Ramm makes this worthwhile comment:

In general, the amillennialists and postmillennialists have interpreted certain parables optimistically whereas premillenarians and dispensationalists have interpreted the same parables pessimistically.⁴²

He illustrates this by the two basic interpretations of the parables of the Mustard Seed and the Leaven (Matt. 13:31-33).

The growth of the mustard seed to a tree, and the permeation of the meal by the leaven is taken by the former to be a teaching of the powerful growth and spread

of Christianity, and by the latter of the corruption of the professing Church.⁴³

This points out the need to keep ourselves open to the ministry of the Spirit and compare our findings with the clear teachings of the rest of the Word. Certain principles must be observed.

Study the Context

This point cannot be stressed too forcefully. The modern critical method is to remove the parable from the setting. The liberals generally agree that the parables are original stories of Christ, re-audenced, re-applied, and generalized by later editors. Jeremias' first two sentences are:

The student of the parables of Jesus, as they have been transmitted to us in the first three Gospels, may be confident that he stands upon a particularly firm historical foundation. The parables are a fragment of the original rock of tradition.⁴⁴

Jesus and His Parables by Murray is quoted by Buttrick:

A recent commentator maintains (and there is sound and reverent scholarship to support the plea) that the parables themselves are more trustworthy guides than their scriptural settings. He quotes Wernle with approval: 'Our delight in the parables rises regularly in the exact degree in which we succeed in liberating ourselves from the interpretations of the Evangelists, and yielding ourselves up to the original force of the parables themselves.'⁴⁵

So, in their view, the parable is an actual logion of Jesus, but they are quick to say that the setting into which the writer places it was an addition of the primitive church. "Thus the parables, in the earliest days, had two settings--their original setting in the life of Jesus, and their later one in the life of the early church."⁴⁶ Therefore, it is clear, the liberal has no room for the setting as contained in the Gospels. Bishop Kennedy in his work on the parables virtually ignores the setting.⁴⁷

The setting is needful, though, if the proper interpretation is to be derived, even as Hope quotes James Denney, "A text without its context is nothing but a pretext."⁴⁸ The evangelical scholar will recognize this. Lightfoot is correct in stating, "The background of the parable and the con-

text of the passage in which it appears will help immeasurably in understanding it."⁴⁹ Another scholar has written:

. . . Perhaps the best way of studying them is not to isolate them from the general history of His ministry for separate consideration, but rather to look at them as parts of a larger whole in connection with the particular occasions which called them forth.⁵⁰

Keys to the interpretation can be found in the context. Often our Lord supplied the interpretation (Matt. 22:14; 25:13). Sometimes it is supplied by the Gospel writer such as the parable of the Unjust Judge (Lk. 18:1). Luke introduces it thus, "And he spake a parable unto them to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint" (v. 1). The Pharisees' murmuring that Jesus ate with sinners brought forth the three parables of Luke 15.

Often the key to the interpretation can be found in the prologue to the parable. The parable of the Pharisee and Publican (Lk. 18:9-14) is introduced by, "And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others" (v. 9). The parable of the Pounds is introduced by Luke in this fashion:

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. And as they heard these things, he added and spake a parable, because he was nigh to Jerusalem, and because they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear (Lk. 19:10, 11).

At other times the epilogue of the parable gives a key to the proper interpretation. After the parable of the Ten Virgins (Matt. 25:1-12), our Lord said, "Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh" (v. 13). "Make to yourselves friends out of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when it fails, they may receive you into everlasting habitations" is the conclusion to the parable of the Unjust Steward (Lk. 16:9, Greek).

In some parables, information for interpretation is given in both the epilogue as well as the prologue. The parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. 18:23-34) is introduced by the question of Peter, "Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him?" (v. 21). Christ told him, "Until seventy times seven" (v. 22). This was followed by the parable. The conclusion to the parable is, "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses" (v. 35).

The context of the parable of the Rich Fool (Lk. 12:16-20) is a further illustration. It was given in response to a man asking Christ to arbitrate the dividing of an inheritance between two feuding brothers (v.14). Christ asked the man, "Who made me a judge or a divider over you?" (v. 14); then he said to those around, "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth" (v. 15). This was followed by the parable to illustrate this truth. Our Lord's conclusion was, "So is he that layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God" (v. 21).

Dodd has well written:

The task of the interpreter of the parables is to find out, if he can, the setting of the parable in the situation contemplated by the Gospels, and hence the application which would suggest itself to one who stood in that situation.⁵¹

Learn and Understand the Story

An understanding of life in Palestine is essential to an understanding of many of the parables. Christ told stories which were common to the people of the day. "Most of the stories involve customs, conditions, and ideas peculiar to the Jews of Palestine in Jesus' time and therefore require explanation before an American reader fully understands them."⁵² Jesus lived among the Jewish people and most of the parables were drawn from the natural setting of the poor Jewish peasant. Customs of possession and transference of property are involved in the story of the Prodigal Son (Lk. 15:11-32). The size of the mustard herb (Matt. 13:31,32) must be learned, not from the mustard plant of the California and Arizona hillsides, but from the mustard plant growing in Palestine. The relative value of talents and pence must be known to appreciate the lesson of forgiveness taught by the parable of the Unmerciful Servant (Matt. 18:23-34). The common practice of broadcasting grain should be familiar to understand the parable of the Sower (Matt. 13:3-8). The parable of the Tares is incomprehensible without an acquaintance with darnel (Matt. 13:24-30).

Ramm has written:

Studies in the local color of the parables have turned up a rich store of information and one is tempted to say that one should never preach again on any parable until he has made himself familiar with this material.⁵³

Recognize the Christological Nature of the Parables

The central theme of the teaching of Christ was the Kingdom of God. The parables were used to illustrate some of the great truths concerning the kingdom. Hope writes:

For a proper understanding of the parables of Jesus it must always be borne in mind that all of them deal with one great subject, and one great subject only, namely, the Kingdom of God.⁵⁴

It is commonly agreed that they are all illustrations of Christ and His mission. Without an understanding of Christ and His mission, the interpretation of the parables is impossible. Bruce divides the parables into three groups: 1) the didactic parables (e.g. parables of the Sower, the Tares, the Mustard Seed) which relate in a general way to teachings concerning the Kingdom of God; 2) the evangelic parables (e.g. parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Son, the Great Supper) which deal with Christ's love for the sinful; and 3) the prophetic or judicial parables (e.g. parables such as the Ten Virgins and the Wicked Husbandman).⁵⁵

Even the critic recognizes the kingdom nature of the parables though he interprets them as realized eschatology. The evangelical realizes the two-fold nature of the kingdom. In one sense it is present (cf. Matt. 13), and in another sense it is yet future in fulfillment (the Ten Virgins, the Talents). Proper interpretation demands that we "keep in mind the centrality of the reign of God in all that Jesus said and did."⁵⁶

Determine the Central Point of the Parable

With but few exceptions the stories of Christ were parables, not allegories.⁵⁷ A true parable has but one main point. Christ spoke a parable to drive home the truth He was endeavoring to teach. Dodd calls this "the most important principle of interpretation."⁵⁸ He continues, "The typical parable, whether it be a simple metaphor, or a more elaborate similitude, or a full length story, presents one single point of comparison."⁵⁹ A parable might be likened to a wheel, the central point is the hub, and all the spokes point to the hub. If the hub is off center, the wheel will not perform and function properly.

Some have seen in the parable of the Prodigal Son two main points; the joy of the Father over the return of a penitent, and a rebuke to those not accepting a sinner returning from the error of his way. These two ideas can be brought together when it is recognized that the thrust of the parable is the joy which should be expressed when a wayward one returns to God.

Even in the Parable of the Sower, the emphasis is on the soil, not the sower.

The four-fold division represents but one truth, viz., Other things being equal, the growth and fruitfulness of seeds will be determined by the nature of the soil upon which they are cast.⁶⁰

Understand the Details

Recognizing the importance of the one central point, the next thing is to understand the various details of the parable. The parabolic method is not expository but topical and parables must be treated in that fashion. The topical method "looks first of all to find the central thought which the parable was designed to embody, and it treats every detail with reference to its bearing upon this thought."⁶¹ Trench gives this advice:

The expositor must proceed on the presumption that there is import in every single point, and only desist from seeking it when either it does not result without forcing, or when we can clearly show that this or that circumstance was merely added for the sake of giving intuitiveness to the narrative.⁶²

He also writes:

It will much help us in the matter of determining what is essential and what is not, if, before we attempt to explain the parts we obtain a firm grasp of the central truth which the parable would set forth, and distinguish it in the mind as sharply and accurately as we can from all cognate truths which border upon it; for only seen from that middle point will the different parts appear in their true light.⁶³

The details are included for a purpose, either they have a definite role in the interpretation or "...they simply belong to the story as a true transcript of life."⁶⁴ Plummer makes this observation concerning the parable of the Unjust Steward (Lk. 16:1-9), "The difficulty and consequent diversity of interpretation are for the most part the result of mistaken attempts to make the details of the parables mean something definite."⁶⁵

Augustine is a notable example of one who endeavored to make the parables "walk on all four." One illustration is sufficient to see his method. In the parable of the Great Supper (Lk. 14:16-24), he interprets the five

yoke of oxen (v. 19) to be the five senses; seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. They are in pairs; two eyes, two ears, two nostrils, the tongue and the palate, and the inner and outer touch. These senses are double; the eyes see light and darkness, the ears hear harsh and musical sounds, the nose smells sweet and offensive odors, the mouth tastes bitter and sweet, and the touch feels smooth and rough. ⁶⁶

Against this extreme view is Chrysostom. He taught that the parable had only one central meaning and they were not to be allegorized. In dealing with Matthew 13:34, 35, he writes, "And, as I am always saying, the parables must not be explained throughout word for word, since many absurdities will follow." ⁶⁷

Thus, in the history of interpretations there have been these two extremes. It caused Trench to write:

There are those who expect to trace only the most general correspondence between the sign and the thing signified; while others aim at running out the interpretation into the minutest detail; with those who occupy every intermediate stage between the two extremes. ⁶⁸

Often it is difficult to determine which is to be interpreted and which is not. Christ gave the interpretation of the parable of the Tares (Matt. 13:24-30, 37-43) and this may be of help at this point. Note that Christ interpreted for the disciples the meaning of the tares, the sower, the field, the good seed, the enemy, the harvest, the reapers; but, at the same time He does not interpret the meaning of the men who slept, the meaning of sleep, the springing up of the wheat, the yielding of fruit, or the servants.

After dealing with the parables of the Sower and the Tares, Terry concludes:

From the above examples we may derive the general principles which are to be observed in the interpretation of parables. No specific rules can be formed that will apply to every case, and show what parts of a parable are designed to be significant, and what parts are mere drapery and form. Sound sense and delicate discrimination are to be cultivated and matured by a protracted study of all the parables, and by careful collation and comparison. ⁶⁹

Thus it is observed that the parts of the parable often play an important role in interpretation, on the other hand they may be given just to

streamline the story. The interpreter must determine the importance of every part.

Certain Warnings

In brief, a few dangers in interpretation should be mentioned. The parables contain much which is doctrinal, and these doctrinal teachings are not to be taken lightly. Ramm has written:

Parables do teach doctrine, and the claim that they may not be used at all in doctrinal writing is improper. But in gleaning our doctrine from the parables we must be strict in our interpretation; we must check our results with the plain, evident teaching of our Lord, and with the rest of the New Testament.⁷⁰

Parables should not be considered primary sources of doctrine. Doctrine may be illustrated and confirmed by parables, but one must be careful to check the interpretation with the whole body of inspired Scripture.

As a further warning, it is needful to be aware that parables are comparisons and illustrations. Every comparison must halt somewhere. The interpreter is to use the parable as an illustration and he must be careful not to interpret it further than the intent of the Lord.

Finally, Christ made it quite clear, many parables cannot be understood by the natural man. These can only be understood by the one who is led by the Spirit (I Cor. 2:9-16). There is a blinding over the hearts of those who willfully refuse the message of our Lord.

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IS GOD THROUGH WITH THE JEW?

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My text is taken from Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter 9, verses 1-5. Bible scholars are agreed that the Roman epistle is probably the greatest treatise ever to come from the pen of man. We bear in mind of course that the apostle was inspired by the Spirit of God. The Roman epistle divides itself into three major divisions. Chapters 1-8 are the doctrinal portion of the epistle setting forth the basic doctrines of the Christian faith. Chapters 9-11 have been referred to as the parenthetical portion of the epistle. In these three chapters Paul deals with Israel. He sets forth her past, present, and future. The last five chapters, 12-16, are the practical portion of the epistle. In these chapters Paul applies the basic Christian doctrines to our everyday Christian living. He insists that, if we have accepted these great truths into our hearts, they should be manifest in our lives. Our lives should be so changed that we would willingly present ourselves as "living sacrifices, holy, acceptable unto God" (Rom. 12:1).

We are concerned primarily with the first five verses that introduce the parenthetical portion of this epistle. In verses 1-3 we have Paul's Prayer for Israel. In verses 4-5 we have God's Promises Concerning Israel. The late Dr. Alva J. McClain refers to these verses as "The Jewish Problem." The problem was not with the Word of God, nor the apostle Paul, but in the minds of Christian men and women. These Christians had listened to the apostle set forth the great doctrines of the Christian faith. These doctrines were Church doctrines and do not refer to God's dealings with His people Israel. Israel was an earthly people--the Church is a heavenly people. The apostle makes it plain that our "citizenship is in heaven" (Phil. 3:20). The teachings of Paul presented a problem to the early Christians. Many of them were well acquainted with the O.T. teachings concerning Israel. They had looked forward to the

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coming of the Messiah. The prophets spoke of a day when David's greater Son would sit upon the throne in Israel and reign as King. Messiah has come but the people did not accept Him. They cried out, "Away with him, crucify him! We will not have this man to reign over us." He was crucified, buried, and rose again the third day. He ascended on high. The problem that the Jewish Christians are now faced with concerned the covenants and promises that God made with Israel. Promises that have to do with an earthly kingdom and king. Are these promises set aside? Has Israel been cast off? Will God ever deal with Israel again? Are we to spiritualize the O.T. promises and apply these promises to the Church because the Church has become spiritual Israel?

History has a strange way of repeating itself. The problems that these early Christians were facing are the same problems that many Christians are facing today. They are asking the same questions. They are applying the O.T. Scriptures to the Church, spiritualizing that which God has not spiritualized. Someone has said, "Whenever you spiritualize that which God has not spiritualized, you become guilty of telling spiritual lies." In Romans 9, 10, 11 the apostle Paul is dealing with this Jewish problem and he solves the problem on the basis of God's Word. We would do well if we followed the example of the great apostle. These so-called "problems" would no longer be problems if we would deal with them according to the teaching of God's Word. Consider with me then the manner in which Paul deals with the Jewish problem. In verses 1-3 we have

PAUL'S PRAYER FOR HIS PEOPLE

I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost, That I have great heaviness and continual sorrow in my heart. For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh:

These verses are often used as a text for a missionary message to challenge God's people for world missions. Usually they are taken out of context and the real meaning is lost. These verses give us a little insight into the heart and soul of the apostle Paul. He shares with us the deep-rooted feelings towards his "brethren. . . according to the flesh." These feelings are based upon his understanding of the teaching of God's Word concerning the holiness, justice and wrath of God.

Paul's concern for Israel, and his desire to see them saved, reminds us of Moses and his intercession on behalf of his people. You will recall that at the time God gave Moses the commandments the people complained that "he delayed to come down out of the mount." They went to Aaron and asked that he make a calf of gold which was to be worshipped as God. In

Egypt they had been exposed to the Apis bull. They saw the Egyptians worship the Apis bull as the god of creation. Apparently they were not cured of idolatry and so they command Aaron to "make a molten calf" in order that they may worship it and say, "These be thy gods, Oh Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt." God's wrath was kindled by this ungodly deed so that He pronounced judgment upon the people. In Exodus 32:9-10 we read,

And the Lord said unto Moses, I have seen this people, and, behold, it is a stiffnecked people: Now therefore let me alone, that my wrath may wax hot against them, and that I may consume them: and I will make of thee a great nation.

A lesser man may have been intrigued by the promise that God gave to Moses. He promises to destroy Israel but, from out of the loins of Moses a great nation will come forth. Moses wasn't intrigued by what God said, however, but rather pours his heart out to God on behalf of his people. In Exodus 32:31-32 we have the prayer of Moses:

And Moses returned unto the Lord, and said, Oh, this people have sinned a great sin, and have made them gods of gold. Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--; and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written.

Notice verse 32 very carefully. Moses prays, "Yet now, if thou wilt forgive their sin--." The translator places a dash after the word "sin" because Moses had not finished his prayer. In other words he pauses in the middle of his prayer. He knows what it is going to mean to his people if God does not forgive their sin. Realizing the awful wrath of God that is pending he continues by saying, "and if not, blot me, I pray thee, out of thy book which thou hast written."

Historically Israel had been a "stiffnecked and rebellious people." At the time of our Lord they took great pride in being the covenant people through whom God gave the world the prophets. They failed to remember that their fathers rebelled against the prophets' message and took action to silence their lips. Jesus said,

Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not! Behold, your house is left unto you desolate.

In Luke 19:43, Jesus said,

For the days shall come upon thee, that thine enemies shall cast a trench about thee, and compass thee round, and keep thee in on every side, And shall lay thee even with the ground, and thy children with thee; and they shall not leave in thee one stone upon another; because thou knewest not the time of thy visitation.

The apostle Paul was well acquainted with these promises. Twenty years have passed since the Lord went home to glory and Paul knew that time was running out for Israel. Within ten years after the writing of this epistle Titus came down and laid Jerusalem waste. Historians tell us that over one million Jews were in Jerusalem at that time. Those that were outside the wall were captured. Many were crucified; others were sold into slavery. Those that lived inside the wall were courageous and held the Romans off for some time. As time went on food became scarce. The people resorted to eating rats and mice and whatever else would keep them alive. When all their food was gone they became cannibals and ate their own children. This also was according to the prophecy set forth by Moses in Deuteronomy 28:49-53,

The Lord shall bring a nation against thee from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flieth; a nation whose tongue thou shalt not understand; a nation of fierce countenance, which shall not regard the person of the old, nor shew favour to the young: And he shall eat the fruit of thy cattle, and the fruit of thy land, until thou be destroyed: which also shall not leave thee either corn, wine, or oil, or increase of thy kine, or flocks of thy sheep, until he have destroyed thee. And he shall besiege thee in all thy gates, until thy high and fenced walls come down, wherein thou trustedst, throughout all thy land: and he shall besiege thee in all thy gates throughout all thy land, which the Lord thy God hath given thee. And thou shalt eat the fruit of thine own body, the flesh of thy sons and of thy daughters, which the Lord thy God hath given thee, in the siege, and in the straightness, wherewith thine enemies shall distress thee.

These were not idle words to the apostle Paul. He knew that judgment had been pronounced and was soon to be executed. Not only would Israel experience God's wrath in time but also throughout eternity. Realizing the awfulness of this judgment Paul cries out, "For I could wish that myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my kinsmen according to the flesh."

God's judgment of Israel presents a great problem. The problem centers around the covenants that God made to this people many years ago. What about these promises? What about these covenants? Are they null and void? Are they to be put aside forever? Is God actually through with the Jew? and will have no further dealings with them as a nation? This is the problem that the apostle Paul seeks to solve. He begins by setting before us

GOD'S EIGHT-FOLD PROMISE TO ISRAEL

This eight-fold promise to Israel is set forth in verses 4-5. Notice carefully the way the apostle begins. In referring to his kinsmen according to the flesh he says, "Who are Israelites." Israel means "a prince with God." In the 32nd chapter of Genesis, Jacob wrestles all night with the angel of the Lord at Penial. As the dawn of a new day was breaking the angel said to Jacob, "Let me go, for the day breaketh. And he said, I will not let thee go, except thou bless me. And he said unto him, what is thy name? And he said, Jacob. And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel: for as a prince hast thou powers with God and with men, and hast prevailed" (Gen. 32:26-28).

In Genesis 35:22-26 we are given the names of Jacob's twelve sons. These twelve sons became the fathers of the twelve tribes of Israel and these twelve tribes are referred to throughout Scripture as "the whole house of Israel."

In verses 4 and 5 of our text the apostle Paul makes it clear that the eight-fold blessing of God is upon Israel. The first blessing referred to is that of

Adoption

The word "adoption" is a New Testament word. The apostle Paul uses it in Romans 8:15 where he says, "But ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father."

In Romans 8:23 we read, "And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body."

In Ephesians 1:5 Paul says, "Having predestinated us unto the adoption of children by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his will."

It is quite obvious from these verses that the word "adoption," as used in the New Testament, speaks of a unique relationship between the

individual believer and God. In Romans 9:4, however, the word is used in a different way. Whereas it speaks of a unique relationship, it refers here, not to a relationship between the individual and God but the relationship of the nation Israel to God. In other words Israel has a unique relationship to her God, a relationship that no other nation can claim.

This relationship is clearly indicated in the message that God gave to Moses to give to Pharaoh. When God sent Moses down into the land of Egypt to tell Pharaoh to let His people go He said, "And thou shalt say unto Pharaoh, Thus saith the Lord, Israel is my son, even my firstborn" (Ex. 4:22).

The word "firstborn" does not actually mean that Israel was born first, but rather it speaks of a place of preeminence that Israel shall have among the nations. In Colossians 1:15 we read that Jesus is "the firstborn of every creature." In verse 18 we read, "Who is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence." Paul does not teach that Jesus Christ was the "firstborn" in the sense that He was born first. But he does teach that Jesus Christ is the preeminent One. He is the Head over all things. The word "firstborn," as it relates to Israel, speaks of the place of preeminence that she has, and will have, among the nations. It is good for us to remember that Israel is a nation, chosen of God, for a special purpose.

This is clearly set forth in Deuteronomy 7:6-8.

For thou art an holy people unto the Lord thy God: the Lord thy God hath chosen thee to be a special people unto himself, above all people that are upon the face of the earth. The Lord did not set his love upon you, nor choose you, because ye were more in number than any people; for ye were the fewest of all people: But because the Lord loved you, and because he would keep the oath which he had sworn unto your fathers, hath the Lord brought you out with a mighty hand, and redeemed you out of the house of bondmen, from the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt.

The question may be asked, "If Israel is God's chosen people why have they suffered the way they have down through the years?" The answer is found, I believe, in Amos 3:2, "You only have I known of all the families of the earth; therefore will I punish you for all your iniquities." In other words there is a family relationship here and God is punishing His children because of their waywardness. God is not seeking revenge by punishing His people but He is preparing them for the task whereunto He has called them. This task has not as yet been completed.

The second blessing referred to in our text is

The Glory

"To Israel pertaineth. . . the glory." The "glory" speaks of the symbolic, visible presence of God. The first mention of this "glory" is in Exodus 13:21 where we read, "And the Lord went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night." The psalmist said, "He spread a cloud for a covering; and fire to give light in the night" (Ps. 105:39). This cloud, which spoke of the presence of God, was for Israel's protection. The people would have been scorched by the hot sun as they travelled through the desert if God had not provided a covering for them. At night the temperature drops so that the children would be in great danger if there was no heat. The Lord took care of this, however, by providing a covering for the day and a fire for the night.

The second mention of the glory is in Exodus 14. The children of Israel have reached the Red Sea but, much to their dismay, the armies of Pharaoh are coming up behind them to take them back into bondage. The people cry out to Moses saying, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, hast thou taken us away to die in the wilderness? wherefore hast thou dealt thus with us, to carry us forth out of Egypt?" (verse 11). Moses' answer to them was, "Fear ye not, stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which he will shew you today: for the Egyptians whom ye have seen today, ye shall see them again no more forever" (verse 13).

Do you remember what the Lord did? Notice verse 19, "And the angel of God, which went before the camp of Israel, removed and went behind them; and the pillar of the cloud went from before their face, and stood behind them." The cloud, the symbolic presence of God, stood between Israel and the Egyptians. God commanded Moses to stretch forth his hand over the sea. As he did so "the waters were divided. And the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea upon dry ground: and the waters were a wall unto them on their right hand, and on their left. And the Egyptians pursued, and went in after them to the midst of the sea, even all Pharaoh's horses, his chariots, and his horsemen.

The next mention of the cloud is in connection with the building of the tabernacle. You will recall that when God called Moses into the mountain, to give him the law, He also shewed him the pattern after which he was to build the tabernacle. The tabernacle was to be the dwelling place of God. In Leviticus 16:2 we read, "And the Lord said unto Moses, speak unto Aaron thy brother, that he come not at all times into the holy place within the veil before the mercy seat, which is upon the ark; that he die not; for I will appear in the cloud upon the mercy seat." God wanted to

dwelt in the midst of His people in order that He might reveal Himself to them in a very special way. Later when they came into the land of Canaan you will recall that Solomon built a temple. The purpose of the temple was the same as the tabernacle. God would dwell in the midst of His people. He would dwell upon the mercy seat in the form of the shekinah glory.

In Ezekiel 10 and 11 the Lord speaks to Ezekiel in a vision. Ezekiel saw the glory rise from the mercy seat; it passed through the veil into the holy place; out the holy place; down the valley of Kidron; up the Mount of Olives where it ascends up into heaven. The glory of the Lord departed from Israel. Israel had sinned and so God withdrew Himself from their presence. For many years there was no glory in Israel, then something tremendous happens. Luke tells us that out in the field of Bethlehem there were "shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord." The glory returns to Israel in the Person of the Lord Jesus Christ. John 1:14 says, "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father) full of grace and truth."

What did John mean when he said, "We beheld His glory"? If you had lived in John's day, and had the opportunity to gaze into the lovely face of the Lord Jesus you would not have seen anything that would have made you think He was divine. We want to remember that although He was very God He was also very man. He was just as much God as if He had never been man; He was just as much man as if He had never been God. We should never lose sight of the fact that in the incarnation Jesus "made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men." There was no halo over His head; however, during His earthly ministry there were the outward manifestations of that inward glory. In the gospel of John there are seven miracles that the Lord Jesus performed before Calvary. These miracles were performed for a special reason. The reason is given in John 20:30-31, "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name." Accompanying these miracles was the outward manifestation of that inward glory. John said, "We beheld His glory."

The Lord Jesus presented Himself to Israel as her long awaited Messiah. Though there were many that were willing to make Him king, the nation as such rejected Him. They cried out, "We will not have this man to reign over us." Instead of a throne He was placed upon a cross.

Little did the people know that this cross was to be the foundation of His kingdom. The Bible gives the meaning to His death: "Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scripture" (I Cor. 15:3, 4). Forty days after His resurrection He met with the disciples on the Mount of Olives. After commissioning them to be witnesses unto the uttermost part of the earth we read,

While they beheld, he was taken up; and a cloud received him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as he went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel; which also said, Ye men of Galilee, why stand ye gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven (Acts 1:9-11).

The glory that appeared to Israel in the Person of Jesus Christ is now taken up into heaven but the promise is that "in like manner" he shall come again. Revelation 1:7 states, "Behold, he cometh with the clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him." Matthew, in his vivid description of the Lord's return, states, "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory" (25:31).

John and Matthew are speaking of the Lord's return unto Israel to establish the fallen kingdom of David. Before this great event takes place there shall be another event. This is referred to as the rapture of the church. The rapture and the revelation are not the same. The glory that pertains to Israel will be seen at the revelation, that is, when He comes to establish His kingdom. There is no glory connected with the rapture. I Corinthians 15:51-52 states:

Behold, I shew you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

In I Thessalonians 4:14-17 we read,

For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together

with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

The "clouds" spoken of are not clouds of glory but saints. They shall be in such great numbers that they shall appear as clouds. This is the secret rapture. No unbelieving eye will witness this great event. It is different, however, when the Lord returns to Israel because at this time the glory that pertaineth to Israel will return and they shall once again "behold His glory."

The third blessing referred to in Romans 9:4 is

The Covenants

The covenants pertain to Israel. In the Old Testament there are three major covenants. I am mindful of the fact that numerous covenants are mentioned in the Old Testament but there are three major covenants. There is the Abrahamic Covenant found in the book of Genesis. This covenant deals with a land, the borders of which are outlined in the Word of God. This land is promised to the people of Israel. The covenant was ratified through sacrifice. It is unconditional and God had promised to fulfill it. Israel has never possessed the land set forth in this covenant, but God, Who is faithful to His promise, will some day bring it to pass.

The second major covenant is the Mosaic Covenant. This is for the most part a covenant of works. God gave Israel a law. With the law was the promise of blessing for obedience and cursing for disobedience. This is a conditional covenant.

The third major covenant is the Davidic Covenant. This covenant has to do with a kingdom. In 2 Samuel 7:12 we read,

And when thy days be fulfilled, and thou shalt sleep with thy fathers, I will set up thy seed after thee, which shall proceed out of thy bowels, and I will establish his kingdom. He shall build an house for my name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever.

This promise has never been fulfilled. Solomon was not the one the Lord referred to. His kingdom came to an end. This kingdom is forever and ever.

One of the questions that was going through the minds of the disciples was, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6). The Lord did not say, "There will be no kingdom--Israel has been put aside." He said, "It is not for you to know the times or the

seasons, which the Father hath put in his own power. But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:7-8). What the Lord is actually telling them is that the kingdom is yet future. Between the time of His ascension and the restoration of the Davidic kingdom He is going to call out His church from among the Jews and Gentiles. When this body is complete He will take them unto Himself.

Following the rapture of the church He will return to earth and establish the kingdom of David. This truth is clearly set forth in Acts 15:14-17. In verse 14 we have the calling out of the church. In verse 16 we have the restoration of Israel and the establishment of David's kingdom. In verse 17 we have the universal blessing that shall be experienced by all men because now Israel is in the land; the king is upon the throne; the universal blessing as promised in the Abrahamic covenant is being experienced by all mankind. At this time the angel's message will be fulfilled, for he said in Luke 1:32-33,

He shall be great, and shall be called the Son of the Highest: and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David: And he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever; and of his kingdom there shall be no end.

Let us ever remember that

Jesus shall reign where ere the sun
Doth his successive journeys run,
His kingdom stretch from shore to shore,
Till moons shall wax and wane no more.

There are five other blessings in this eight-fold blessing to Israel, which require little comment. The fourth one is

The Law

To Israel pertaineth the law. I take it that the Law he refers to is the law that God gave to Moses at Mt. Sinai. Romans 2:14 states: "When the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves." The fact is that unto Israel the law was given. This law is the greatest document ever given to man.

The fifth blessing is referred to as

The Service of God

The service of God refers to the temple services and these services were carried on by Israel's priesthood.

The sixth blessing is

The Promises

The promises refer to the Messianic promises. Promises concerning the coming of the Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ. He was to come as the suffering servant of Jehovah to die for humanity's sin; He was to come as David's greater Son to reign.

The seventh blessing is set forth in these words,

Whose are the Fathers

The fathers refer to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Every Jew is able to proudly point back to the patriarchs and say "These are our fathers." No Gentile can make that boast.

The eighth blessing is Christ:

Of Whom as Concerning the Flesh Christ Came

The apostle Paul states in Galatians 4:4,

But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

When "the fulness of time was come" God chose a Jewish maiden to be the earthly parent of His eternal Son the Lord Jesus. Israel was the channel through whom God was going to give the world the Saviour. No greater blessing could ever have been bestowed upon a people. No people under God's heaven can make this boast. To Israel. . . Christ came, and Paul says, "Who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen" (Rom. 9:5). The apostle wants us to know that, as far as His humanity was concerned He was born of a Jewish maiden, but as far as His deity was concerned He "is over all, God blessed forever."

As we bring this study to a close, may I ask the question once again, "Is God through with the Jew?" Would you conclude from the evidence that God has turned His back upon Israel and will never deal with them again? Let the Word of God speak for itself. In Jeremiah 31:10 we read,

Hear the word of the Lord, O ye nations, and declare it in the isles afar off, and say, He that scattered Israel will gather him, and keep him, as a shepherd doth his flock.

God has promised to make a new covenant with Israel and with the house of Judah. In verses 35-37 we read,

Thus saith the Lord, which giveth the sun for a light by day, and the ordinances of the moon and of the stars for a light by night, which divideth the sea when the waves thereof roar; The Lord of hosts is his name: If those ordinances depart from before me, saith the Lord, then the seed of Israel also shall cease from being a nation before me forever. Thus saith the Lord; If heaven above can be measured, and the foundations of the earth searched out beneath, I will also cast off all the seed of Israel for all that they have done, saith the Lord.

Do you grasp the prophet's message? Or, I should say, God's message to the nations? Unless you are able to pluck the stars from the heavens, or measure the heavens, or search out the foundations of the earth, Israel will remain a nation before God. God is not through with the Jew. He has hardly begun. Israel is referred to as the "people of the unfinished task." Soon God is going to deal again in mercy with her and, when He does, the world will marvel at the goodness and mercy and the wisdom of God, in calling this people.

DID SAMUEL SIN?

PETER N. GREENHOW

One of the many ways in which the Bible distinguishes itself from other ancient literature as being a direct revelation from God is in the biographical accounts of many of the great Old Testament saints. Time and time again the sins of the most godly men are exposed and denounced. Such a frank admission of personal sin and error is probably without parallel in ancient literature.

If this great objectivity in the Biblical accounts is an indication of revelation, then we, as interpreters, must ever be on guard that we suppress our natural tendencies to elevate a hero and be frank to admit sin and error where it indeed exists.

Samuel the prophet played no small role in the history of Israel living as he did at a time of transition from a theocracy to a monarchy. His virtues were many and yet his life was not without sin. He turned the hearts of many to the Lord and yet his own sons walked amiss, took bribes, and perverted the ways of the Lord. Doubtless Samuel's life was blemished with sin in many areas as is the life of every saint of God. It is to one of these questionable incidents that this paper is directed. Our quest will be to attempt to show that Samuel was in error when he turned to worship with Saul after Saul had committed his great sin in refusing to slay utterly the Amalekites at the command of the Lord.

Our considerations will be directed primarily to I Samuel 15:26 and 31 with their context. "And Samuel said to Saul, 'I will not return with you...' . . . So Samuel turned back after Saul; and Saul worshipped the Lord."

THE SETTING

It is hard to imagine a setting with more profound and serious overtones than that of I Samuel 15. The occasion is familiar. Saul had disobeyed the command of the Lord in refusing to slay utterly the Amalekites. The author holds the B.S.A. and M.S.A. degrees from the University of Toronto, and is presently pursuing postgraduate study in theology at Grace Theological Seminary.

ekites. This sin seemed to be the culmination of a life of disobedience which brought upon him the condemnation of the Lord. Verses 25 and 28 embody the pronouncement of judgment. ". . . Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, he has also rejected you from being king. . . . The Lord has torn the kingdom of Israel from you this day, and has given it to a neighbour of yours, who is better than you."

Within such a context of Divine judgment we do well to note carefully the words and actions of all concerned--in this case, Saul and Samuel.

The seriousness of the situation is further delineated by Samuel's words in 15:16, "Then Samuel said to Saul, 'Stop! I will tell you what the Lord said to me this night'. . . ." Although we are not able to say of a certainty all that the Lord told Samuel, we can be assured that all of the words uttered throughout the scene bear tremendous implications. We believe that Samuel's change of mind with regard to his willingness to worship with Saul exhibited a spiritual weakness and resulted in a serious judgment.

COMMON INTERPRETATIONS

When the standard works on the Old Testament are consulted, it is found that there is a general agreement among Biblical scholars that Samuel's capitulation to Saul's pleadings are in order and easily explained. Condemnation of the prophet is difficult to come by.

Our contention is not that these standard explanations are not without value. We do, however, feel that they fall short of explaining the motives and outcome of certain aspects of Samuel's encounter with Saul.

We are going to take the liberty to express some of these views at this point and then present some observations and conclusions of our own.

F. B. Meyer:

Finally, Samuel stayed with him that the elders might not become disaffected and that the people generally might have no idea of the deposition of the king, lest the kingdom itself might totter to its fall before his successor was prepared to take his place. He stayed therefore.¹

S. Ridout:

Saul begs that Samuel will return with him, still to honor the Lord in sacrifice; but the prophet cannot compromise. The declaration of judgment had been final, and could

not be retracted. Saul was a rejected man, and there must be no uncertainty to this. Therefore the prophet, whatever his personal feelings may be, turns away from the suppliant king. . . . Again Saul pleads. . . . Saul consents to this, as God had His own ways of working out His purposes. It was not necessary that Saul should be outwardly deposed at once. His own conduct will manifest his unfitness for his position, and therefore, it could be no compromise for Samuel to return thus and worship with the king."²

Keil and Delitzsch:

The κόβ presupposes that Samuel was about to go away after executing his commission. . . . After this declaration as to the irrevocable character of the determination of God to reject Saul, Samuel yielded to the renewed entreaty of Saul, that he would honour him by his presence before the elders and the people, and remain whilst Saul worshipped. . . also to carry out the ban upon Agag, whom Saul had spared. . . .³

J. P. Lange:

Samuel's turning away from Saul was a vigorous confirmation of his rejection, and a sign that he would henceforth have no association with him. . . . He then acceded to Saul's request, not, of course, to yield to his selfish opposition to God's honour, but to preserve unimpaired in the eyes of the people the position of Saul's kingdom...⁴

T. Scott:

. . . Samuel however, perhaps by divine directive, changed his mind and delayed his departure; that he might not occasion any disturbance among the people, and that he might execute the justice of God upon Agag.⁵

Gray and Adams:

. . . "not return," public disapproval of Saul's act must be shown. . . . And to this request Samuel accedes."⁶

M. Pool:

. . . "I will not return with thee": this was no lie, though

he afterwards returned, because he spoke what he meant; his words and intentions agreed together, though afterwards he saw reason to change his intentions: . . . Samuel turned again first, that people might not upon pretence of this sentence of rejection immediately withdraw all respect and obedience to their sovereign; . . . secondly, that he might rectify Saul's error, and execute God's judgment upon Agag.⁷

Seventh-Day Adventist:

There were perhaps two reasons why Samuel changed his mind: (1) He wanted to do everything possible to win Saul as an individual. (2) His known disapproval of Saul might lead some of the discontented spirits in Israel to use this as an excuse to revolt.⁸

The foregoing lengthy list of comments has been given to show that without apparent exception, Biblical commentators explain or excuse Samuel's change of mind in a few common ways. He did it either to win Saul, to prevent the people from forsaking Saul, or to slay Agag. Only one commentator was found who thought that Samuel might have received a Divine directive to change his mind.

In several cases, comments are made suggesting that Samuel's initial refusal was made in order to give a public disapproval of Saul's sin. If such is true, then it would seem difficult, if not impossible, to justify his later change of mind at the insistence of Saul. Nor does it seem proper to excuse Samuel's capitulation to Saul's demands by saying that he did not actually worship with him. Verse 26 makes it clear that Samuel would not even return with Saul whether to worship or not. There seems to be no justification whatever in attributing to Samuel's words the idea of returning to worship. He would return for no reason whatever.

The only explanation of Saul's actions which seems in any way plausible is the argument that Saul was expressing his own intention initially but was actually carrying out a Divine directive when he returned with Saul. Again, this explanation seems difficult to substantiate from the text. How do we know that one as opposed to the other or either of Samuel's actions were Divinely directed? To hold that the latter action only was Divinely directed is an argument from silence. The thrust seems to be that since Samuel returned, this fact presupposes a word from the Lord. This to me seems to put one on the dangerous ground of placing the integrity of the man above the integrity of the plain statement of Scripture.

My conclusion thus far is that there is no satisfactory explanation for Samuel's capitulation to Saul's strong requests. The arguments used do not in any way clear the problem. They use the logic that the end justifies the means, e.g.: Samuel yields to Saul (against his better judgment) in order to retain the favour of the people. The principle of separation in worship is sacrificed to the pressure of public opinion. The argument concerning the slaying of Agag holds no greater weight. The slaying of Agag did not necessitate Saul's presence with Samuel in public worship. To argue thus seems futile at best.

The conclusion that Samuel's yielding to Saul's request constituted a sin, can be well argued from the statements of verses 25 and 28 alone. Our surprise is that no commentary consulted even suggested that Samuel might have been in error at this point. There seems to be a genuine reluctance to lower him from his priestly pedestal. But Samuel's own contradictory words do not exhaust the arguments in favour of the view being presented. There are, we believe, at least two other arguments from circumstantial evidence which we believe support this view. To these arguments we now direct our attention.

FURTHER EVIDENCE

The first argument given concerns Samuel's refusal to separate himself from a flagrant sinner in the act of worship. To our knowledge, all commentators agree that Saul's words in verse 30: "I have sinned. . ." do not, at this point at least, indicate true repentance. The Pulpit Commentary concludes: "We have here no real confession of guilt."⁹ Ellicott, quoting St. Gregory, states: "If Saul had been really penitent, he would pray to have been humble rather than to be honoured."¹⁰ Kirkpatrick in the Cambridge Commentary deals a death blow to any argument that Saul may have been sincere. He states that "John 5:44 and 14:43 point to the radical defect in Saul's character."¹¹ It will be well to quote these verses here. John 5:44, "How can you believe who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the only God?" John 12:43, "For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." Although these quotes are from the New Testament, they simple echo the thrust of Samuel's eloquent words to Saul on this very occasion, "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice." Saul's insincerity was therefore shown by his words and he was thus excluded as a candidate for public worship with a man of God.

Saul's misdirected enthusiasm also shows in his actions toward Samuel. Verse 27 tells us, "As Samuel turned to go away, Saul laid hold upon the skirt of his robe, and it tore." Now this act on the part of Saul was contrary to Scripture which plainly teaches that the garment of the

priest must not be torn. Exodus 28:32, "It shall have in it an opening for the head, with a woven binding around the opening, like the opening in a garment, that it may not be torn" (underlining mine). The Scriptural teaching that the priest's garment must not be torn was carried out with regard to our Lord as prophesied in Psalm 22:18, "They divide my garments among them, and for my raiment they cast lots." The fulfillment of this prophecy is recorded in John 19:24, "So they said one to another, 'Let us not tear it, but cast lots for it to see whose it shall be.' This was to fulfill the scripture" (underlining mine). Now this remarkable fulfillment of Scripture seems to bear significant implications. The tearing of a priest's garment was a serious matter. Samuel knew that it was and knew also that Saul had committed, in his desperate actions, this sin. The violence of Saul is well attested to in the remarks given by the Pulpit Commentary. "Now the me^eclo was not a loosely flowing garment, but fitted rather closely to the body, and, therefore, the tearing of it implies a considerable amount of violence on Saul's part."¹² Kirkpatrick differs in his description when he describes the skirt of his mantle as "some kind of lappet or flap hanging down behind, which could be easily torn off."¹³ Despite the uncertainty of the garment's structure, there can be no doubt about the action. Saul tore it.

In view of Saul's violent actions it would then seem entirely inappropriate for Samuel to worship with Saul at this time.

Samuel's error may be further hinted at in verse 35. "And Samuel did not see Saul again until the day of his death, but Samuel grieved over Saul. . ." I Samuel 19:24 does not contradict this statement. "All intercourse with Saul on Samuel's side ceased from now on, since God had rejected him, and Samuel could have met him only as a messenger and prophet of God."¹⁴ Normally, the fact that Saul and Samuel had no more encounters (except that of I Samuel 19:24) is considered a judgment upon Saul. The account, however, seems to put Samuel under considerable judgment also. It was Samuel who grieved the loss of their friendship. And later on in I Samuel 28:15, 19, 20 we are told that Saul was permitted to disquiet Samuel. Although this is known to be a problem verse, there is a suspicion that the disquieting of Samuel on the part of Saul may have been a permissive act by God upon Samuel because he did not himself voluntarily separate from Saul. The fact that Samuel saw Saul no more illustrates a further Biblical teaching set forth by Paul in I Corinthians 5. Because Samuel did not separate himself and mourn for Saul willingly, he was forced into it circumstantially by God. Paul taught the Corinthians that they should mourn for those who sin (I Cor. 5:2) and should "drive out the wicked person from among you" (I Cor. 5:13). Despite his refusal to do such, the Biblical concept of separation was accomplished in the life of Samuel.

CONCLUSION

The defense of our thesis is now complete. Let us summarize in conclusion.

Samuel seems to have been in error when he yielded to Saul's request to return and worship. Our substantiation is threefold. First, Samuel's words are contradictory. He was right either the first or the second time, but not both. Biblical principles of separation indicate that he was correct in his initial statement and in error in his ultimate action. Second, Saul's violent action in tearing Samuel's garment disqualified him as a person with whom to worship (perhaps Samuel himself was temporarily disqualified, too, because of his torn garment) and Samuel's public recognition with him was an error. Third, the ultimate results of the incident indicate that Samuel's unwillingness to separate from Saul was brought about despite his actions.

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BOOK REVIEWS

WHAT'S NEW IN RELIGION? By Kenneth Hamilton. William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, Grand Rapids, 1968. \$3.95.

New theologies, new moralities, or are they, really? Kenneth Hamilton seeks to demonstrate that what seems new is really a recasting in different verbiage of ideas that have crossed the theological and moral ethics stages in the past. Hamilton's thesis is discussed in Part 1 of his book. Part 2 analyzes various new religious themes in four subdivisions. Hamilton's Part 2 looks at the chief elements of the more conspicuous theological tenets palmed off as uniquely different religious topics. Part 3 is devoted to Bonhoeffer's "worldly" Christianity. Part 4 deals with the secular in faith and morals. Hamilton concludes with assorted treatments of liberalism and conservatism with consideration of the conflicts between them.

Hamilton demonstrates an understanding grasp of the doctrines of the new theologies and doctrinal offshoots. Perhaps a bit too advanced for the average layman, Hamilton's book is a useful tool for seminary students and ministers desiring to be knowledgeable in the new theologies without bogging down in special seminary religion courses. Read Hamilton's book. Then see if the themes he discusses are easier to comprehend. If, then, you have difficulties with the new religious thinking, do not blame Kenneth Hamilton. Condemn the complexities of the new theologies!

One thing for sure, Hamilton's book can save ministers a heavy cash outlay in the original texts of the doctrinal systems underlying the new religion.

Benjamin A. Hamilton

Grace Theological Seminary

CONQUEST AND CRISIS. By John J. Davis. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1969. \$2.95. 176 pp (paper).

Pastors, teachers and laymen will welcome this concise analysis of Israel's history according to Joshua, Judges and Ruth. In our day when liberals rewrite, redate and reduce Biblical history, more scholarly

pens like this one need to write. Dr. John J. Davis systematically considers the messages of these books adding light from recent archaeological findings, ancient Near Eastern history and the Hebrew text. He conservatively maintains the inspiration of the Word and the unity of the books.

The author faces the difficult problems, gives possible solutions and accepts a personal view: e.g. Joshua's extended light by refraction (p. 66), the supernatural collapse of Jericho's walls (pp. 46, 47), and the supply of wives to Benjamin without breaking of the oath (p. 152). Examples of moral problems under his consideration are Rahab's 'situational' lie (p. 35), the death of all living things in captured cities (pp. 48, 49), and Ruth's uncovering of Boaz's skirt (pp. 165-167). Without the enlightening pen of Dr. Davis, the reader might miss significant facts such as the left-handed Ehud drew his dagger from opposite the normal holstering position and thereby, disarmed the attention of King Eglon. If Joshua practiced the Book of the Law, Moses must have already written this Law. The "hornet" of Joshua 24:12 is a figurative reference to the panic-producing power of God, which overcame both Sihon and Og.

The practical considerations of Dr. Davis are refreshing. He makes scattered applications throughout the book and sets aside some concluding paragraphs of chapters for special emphasis. The author avoids excessive spiritualization and typological approach. A central idea is that limited success in spiritual warfare is due to the half-hearted obedience on the part of believers.

Sixteen excellent illustrations of maps, charts and photographs are found in this work. Dr. Davis includes an index, a transliteration form to aid with Hebrew and Greek words and a bibliography of over sixty books, articles and periodicals. His clear chapter divisions make easy reference work. Two minor criticisms which in no way detract from this excellent work are (1) identification should be made of the author who suggests trumpet pitches for destruction of Jericho's walls (p. 46); (2) Ruth 1:1 should read Ruth 3:1 (p. 165). Dr. Davis is the Associate Professor of Old Testament and Hebrew at Grace Theological Seminary.

James H. Gabhart

Community Church
Tippecanoe, Indiana

FIGURES OF SPEECH USED IN THE BIBLE. By E. W. Bullinger. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1968. 1104 pp. \$14.95.

The reprinting of this remarkable work is certainly a service to every serious Bible student. The paucity of helpful literature on the subject

makes this volume particularly welcome. Although it was originally published in London in 1898, the book has been relatively unknown until now. It seems incredible that the two most widely used recent textbooks on hermeneutics (by Ramm and Mickelsen) make no mention of it whatsoever.

The task of interpreting the harder portions of Scripture meets one of its greatest challenges in the understanding of the figurative language found everywhere in the Bible. Interpreters have often assumed one of two extremes in treating Biblical figures of speech. On the one hand, some scholars refuse to recognize the existence of the figures in favor of a forced literalism. On the other hand, some adopt a special hermeneutic for many figurative sections resulting in an allegorizing of those Scriptures. Bullinger's book posits a correct literalism which accepts the presence and significance of figurative language in addition to the literal language of the Bible, and interprets all Biblical language in the sense that was normal to the author and the original readers.

Bullinger has written an exhaustive work on the figurative language of God's Word. He catalogs and discusses no less than two hundred seventeen distinct figures, all classified in three divisions: figures involving omission, addition, or change. For each figure the author gives in systematic order (1) the etymology of the name of the figure, (2) explanation and synonyms of the figure, and (3) a number of Scripture quotations where the figure is used, giving full explanation of its use in each instance. Some figures appear only once in the entire Bible. Others occur hundreds of times. For these frequent figures Bullinger offers representative examples, *e.g.* for Hyperbole he lists fifty-eight passages. The total list of illustrations includes nearly eight thousand texts!

The value of a reference work is largely dependent on the calibre of its indices. The busy pastor and professor will especially appreciate the fifty-six page index of Biblical texts. There are six other exhaustive listings indexing (1) proper names of figures, (2) English equivalents of figures, (3) special literary structures cited from Scriptures, (4) subjects, (5) Hebrew words explained, and (6) Greek words explained.

Ethelbert W. Bullinger (1837-1913) is best known to Grace Journal readers as the father of ultra-dispensationalism. Furthermore, he held the aberrant doctrine of soul-sleep. Thus, despite his record as a distinguished Anglican clergyman, editor, musician, and prolific author of seventy-seven scholarly works, Bullinger's name arouses suspicion. In this volume, some of the author's divergent views subtly appear in his interpretations of Scripture, *e.g.* note his position on the intermediate state of the dead in Christ implied in his treatment of Philippians 1:23, 2 Corinthians 5:6, 8, and other texts. However, this volume was obviously

not intended to be an exposition of the author's special beliefs, and one must search for such explanations that do rarely occur. Even when considered collectively they do not constitute a major detraction from the enduring importance and value of this work.

Robert F. Ramey

Grace Theological Seminary

BRIMSTONE CHURCH. By H. Crosby Englizian. Moody Press, Chicago. 286 pp. \$4.95.

Graduate of Grace College and Grace Theological Seminary, Englizian has produced a book based on his Dallas Theological Seminary dissertation that gives an enlightening, entertaining and enthusiastic survey of Boston's Park Street Church history.

Englizian's work pleasingly lacks the boring mechanical array of data that characterizes many church history treatises.

Accounts of the founding of Park Street Church in chapters 2 and 3 of Brimstone Corner mirror the religious climate of Boston and the religious qualities of leading churchgoers of early nineteenth-century days. Problems associated with maintenance of church disciplines and humorous solutions provided by Park Street Church are noted in chapter 5.

Early in its history the noteworthy Boston church became interested in Congregational foreign mission endeavors in Hawaii (then a foreign kingdom) and Liberia (then an American colonization project for freed slaves in Africa). Park Street Church supported several additional benevolent societies simultaneously and Englizian capably records their impact on the church (chapter 6). He reports the pros and cons accompanying the introduction of Sunday schools into Park Street Church in a day when such groups were controversial efforts to reach young people (chapter 8).

In the last nineteenth-century decade Park Street Church experienced a serious decline (chapters 14, 15 Brimstone Corner). Englizian's version of the sad events cover the background of the downfall in an understandable way. Fortunately, the church decline was followed by an encouraging rebirth at the dawn of the current century and the events show an encouraging resurgence of faith at the hands of Englizian.

Brimstone Corner's author sketches prominent personalities in the life of Park Street Church in a way that makes them live. Each characterization introduces features and qualities about the men sometimes unknown. Englizian's two-page conclusion regarding Park Street Church is enlightening.

A comprehensive bibliography, assorted appendices and biographical digests of all Park Street Church pastors are useful appendages. The album of Park Street Church is appropriately ample in extent and the restraint on footnotes takes away a feature of dissertations that annoys.

Benjamin A. Hamilton

Grace Theological Seminary

THE BOOK OF OBADIAH. By Don W. Hillis. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1968. 75 pp. \$1.95, paper.

The two key features of this book are the discussions on Esau and the gathering of pertinent Scriptures to illuminate the text of Obadiah. The pride and hatred of the Edomites after their father Esau bring their destruction. Many Scriptures outside of Obadiah confirm the judgment of God against all who subsequently travel this course. Obadiah is God's "telegram"--a brief prophecy with a significant spiritual message.

Dr. Don W. Hillis, Associate Director of TEAM, considers the theme of Obadiah in five words "Edom's doom and Israel's glory." Of the twelve Obadiah's in the Bible, the author lets the reader decide the true author of this book. The same consideration is given on the date of Obadiah. After six pages of discussion on the early, middle and late datings of Obadiah, Dr. Hillis encourages the reader to focus attention on the message rather than the date of the work.

About fifty percent of the book is an exposition of Obadiah's message. The work is non-technical and primarily non-devotional. Historical references are enlightening and many quotations of the author are profitable. The bibliography is unusual in that it is neither alphabetical nor systematic in arrangement. The applications for the reader in Chapter VIII, "Obadiah Speaks Today," could be profitably sprinkled into Chapters V-VII. Several quotations from authors such as Omar Bradley (p. 41), Joseph Cohn (p. 35) and David Johnson (pp. 69, 70) are not identified as to their sources.

This book from the Shield Bible Study series is recommended.

James H. Gabhart

Community Church
Tippecanoe, Indiana

THE STRATEGIC GRASP OF THE BIBLE. By J. Sidlow Baxter. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1970. 405 pp. \$6.95.

With characteristic clarity and freshness, Dr. Baxter makes another contribution to the shelf of synthetical Bible studies. His earlier work, *Explore the Book*, an interpretive course of Bible study from Genesis to Revelation, has proved edifying and instructive to thousands. Since most Christians are over fed on analytical Bible study, this book will help its readers to a needed dimension in their knowledge of God's Word.

The volume is subtitled, "A Series of Studies in the Structural and Dispensational Characteristics of the Bible." As such the work is not a book-by-book study of the Scriptures. Instead it offers thematic studies classified as either "architectural" or dispensational. Many of these studies offer little new information to the seasoned Bible student. However, the old truths are presented with creative insights and unusual outlines, tables, and charts which will certainly stimulate greater appreciation and study of the Word.

The chapter on the Christocentric nature of the Bible is particularly refreshing. It is remarkable to read Dr. Baxter's section on Old Testament typology in a day when this subject is admitted with reluctance and discussed with reticence.

Perhaps the most creative studies are found in the three chapters, covering fifty pages, devoted to the "re-survey" and "re-thinking" of the book of Acts. It is the author's contention that the entire book of Acts is "primarily a renewed offer of the Kingdom of Heaven to the nation Israel." Dr. Baxter offers convincing evidence for this unique position, while rejecting the teachings of Pentecostalism on the one hand and Ultra-dispensationalism on the other. It should be noted that some of Baxter's statements describing Pentecostalism have been recently quoted out of context, giving the impression that he advocates the "second blessing" doctrine. This is not so (see pages 341, 342).

There are some regrettable aspects about the book. It is disappointing that this careful Bible scholar allows the loud voice of uniformitarian geology to convince him that the Noahic Flood was a local event. Repeatedly Baxter singles out the Scofield Reference Bible (both the older and new editions) for pointed, though respectful, attacks, particularly in regard to the notes on the Kingdom of God. In a book of such wide scope, the total absence of any type of index is most unfortunate. However, despite any blemishes this work might have, it is heartily recommended to Grace Journal readers.

Robert F. Ramey

Grace Theological Seminary

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- TWENTIETH CENTURY PROPHECY: JEANE DIXON, EDGAR CAYCE. By James Bjornstad. Bethany Fellowship, Inc., Minneapolis, Minnesota, 1969. 151 pp. \$2.95.
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- LAST THINGS. By H. Leo Eddleman. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 160 pp. \$3.95.

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- THE ZONDERVAN TOPICAL BIBLE. Edited by Edward Viening. Zondervan Publishing House, Grand Rapids, 1969. 1114 pp. \$9.95.
- HELPING THE RETARDED TO KNOW GOD. By Hans R. Hahn and Werner H. Raasch. Concordia Publishing House, St. Louis, Missouri, 1969. 112 pp. Pupil's Text, 52 pp. Instructor's Guide. \$1.95 each, paper.
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THE LIMITATIONS OF ARCHAEOLOGY IMPOSED BY INTERPRETATION AND LACK OF DATA

FOREST WEDDLE
Professor
Fort Wayne Bible College

The science of archaeology came to the aid of the Bible student at a time when destructive higher criticism, spawned by seventeenth century English deism and eighteenth century German rationalism, was making severe inroads on the credibility of the historical records in the Bible. At first the critical scholars discounted the claims of archaeology. When Hermann Hilprecht discovered bricks in the ruins of a Babylonian temple bearing the stamp of a king whom the scholars believed to be mythical, they accused Hilprecht of fabricating the temple ruins himself as a hoax. But, little by little, surely and inexorably, the retreat began. Today no reputable archaeologist, liberal or conservative, would presume to undertake the excavation of a Biblical site without studying very carefully all that the Bible has to say about it. To do so may save hours or days of futile effort.

Perhaps because archaeology made the Bible stories come alive by bringing to the daylight the very objects looked upon or used by people of Bible times, it earned its earliest reputation as a means to "prove the Bible true." No doubt this is the role in which archaeology holds its chief interest to the layman today. It is quite limited in this respect, however. Its usefulness is confined almost entirely to the corroboration of Biblical history and cognate areas, such as anthropology and sociology. In only the rarest of cases can it provide proofs pertaining to doctrine, religion, or ethics--areas which do not lend themselves so easily to objective proof.

This paper was read before the Midwestern section of the Evangelical Theological Society at Winona Lake, Indiana, April 17, 1970.

An even more important function of archaeology, however, has been its ability to provide an accurate setting or backdrop for the Bible story. As techniques become more refined, the reconstruction of the past has been accomplished in much greater detail, and this has proved an invaluable aid to the proper understanding of the Bible. Archaeology is, therefore, a hermeneutic as well as an apologetic.

Science has made tremendous strides in this age. Nevertheless, the sincere scientist is quite humble in his attitude toward his chosen field. He knows only too well the limitations of science and is constantly re-examining his own assumptions. The layman, on the other hand, has been conditioned to the marvels of science. Almost unquestioningly he accepts the premise that if science says it is true, that settles it. Who dares to challenge it?

The scientific methods employed by archaeology place it in this enviable position of seeming infallibility. If then some new insight into the interpretation of data or the acquisition of new data makes it necessary to revise the thesis formerly held, some persons may become badly shaken. They wonder just what they can believe. Didn't science say it was so? How then can it be altered so readily? Less mature individuals may become deeply disturbed by such instances. They feel somehow that, by changing his views, the archaeologist has let them down.

It should be borne in mind, however, that with archaeology, as with any other science, the existing body of knowledge obtained through the scientific method, lies at varying levels of certainty. Some facts are so well-attested that their certainty is virtually absolute. There is, for example, extremely little likelihood that any evidence will turn up to disprove the existence of a nation called the Hittites or of such persons as Sargon II (formerly known only in the Bible, and then only in one place, Isaiah 20:1), or of a Babylonian king named Belshazzar; yet each of these now-accepted facts was at one time regarded as mythical.

It was once argued that the Book of Daniel must necessarily be of late date because it contains Greek names for certain musical instruments, and Greek was surely unknown to the Hebrews of the traditional date of Daniel. The finding of Greek shields and weapons at the site of the battle of Carchemish, however, revealed the fact that Pharaoh Necho had Greek mercenary soldiers marching in his army when he came through Israel in Josiah's day.¹ Recent evidence of the great antiquity of the Greek language makes it highly unlikely that the Hebrews knew nothing of the Greeks. This will be discussed later.

At a somewhat lower level of certainty are the conclusions which, although apparently well-established, could conceivably be altered if enough

evidence to the contrary should present itself. An example has to do with the location of Ur of the Chaldees, Abraham's birthplace. In earlier days, both northern and southern sites were suggested for Ur. Many favored a site somewhere in Northern Mesopotamia. The Chebar River or place of Ezekiel's exile² was believed to be the Khabur or Habor River in upper Mesopotamia near Haran. Urfa (later called Edessa) was one suggested site for Ur. Woolley's discovery of the amazing and very ancient civilization in lower Mesopotamia led to a greater confidence in the southern Ur as the probable site of Abraham's city, and the Chebar River, in turn, was believed to be a canal in Babylonia. But not all abandoned the northern site. Cyrus Gordon³ argues for a place called Ura which seems to have been northeast of Haran. In the royal palace at Ugarit was found a tablet sent to the King of Ugarit by his superior, Hattusil III of Hattusa, the Hittite capital in Asia Minor. The tablet stipulates that traveling merchants from Ura could not purchase real estate, no doubt lest they gain too much control in the land. The Genesis narrative twice refers to the patriarchs as traders⁴ and Abraham is said to have had much silver and gold as well as flocks and herds.⁵ Gordon, therefore, believes Abraham to be one of these traders rather than a mere bedawah. When Abraham sought to purchase a burial ground for Sarah, the Hittites said, "Thou art a mighty prince among us."⁶ Gordon saw this statement as the Hittites' way of justifying a sale which normally would be open to question. The fact that Abraham's Ur is said to be "of the Chaldees" does not postulate a southern location, for Xenophon in the Anabasis mentions Chaldeans living in Armenia.⁷ Opinion still favors a southern Ur, but further data could possibly call for a revision.

The third level of certainty with regard to data pertains to those items which elicit speculation rather than certainty. Perhaps the interpretation is based on some single item of evidence which gives rise to an interesting theory unsupported, however, by any other data. Examples are Woolley's conjecture that the clay deposit at Ur was made by Noah's flood, and Glueck's belief that Solomon had invented blast furnaces to smelt copper in his day. Both of these proposals were seen in a different light by other archaeologists, as we shall see later.

There is indeed a sense in which archaeological evidence is infallible. It is simply this: that no matter what may be found in the process of excavation, there is some valid reason why it is what it is and where it is. Therefore, field work must be carried on with great attention to the most minute details, and the recording of evidence must be with extreme accuracy; for these are the objective data which, in a sense, cannot lie.

From this point on, however, the subjective element enters the picture, and the steps in the archaeological process may involve error.

Employing all available evidence, the archaeologist must arrive at a conclusion concerning what he has found. It will be influenced by many factors besides the objective evidence. Among these will be the archaeologist's experience with other sites and with the specific cultures represented in the present site; his degree of familiarity with many disciplines such as history, language, anthropology and perhaps even physics and chemistry. He must draw upon his knowledge in many fields in order to integrate the scattered items of evidence and make them tell a coherent story.

But this is not all. Even the most objectively-minded interpreter cannot fully escape from his cultural, religious, and philosophical biases. The annals of archaeology are replete with examples where bias affected interpretation. From his childhood Heinrich Schliemann was determined to dig up the Troy of which Homer sang. Therefore, when he dug, he was convinced that he had found it, although later investigation revealed that the Troy he dug up far antedated the one which he was seeking.

The Tell el Amarna letters were a collection of clay tablets written in cuneiform or wedge-shaped characters. They were found in 1887 by an Egyptian woman prowling in a rubbish heap. Scholars refused to consider them because they knew that cuneiform writing and clay tablets were not used in ancient Egypt. Assuredly they must be spurious. It was Sir Wallis Budge who discovered that the letters consisted of international correspondence sent by kings in Palestine and the Fertile Crescent to the Egyptian Pharaoh. Bias has delayed for a time the importance of the discovery.

Again Minoan Linear B when first investigated showed signs of being some form of Greek, but it was deemed certain that the Greek language was not that old; therefore, the scholars wandered afield in their attempts at decipherment. By the perseverance of Michael Ventris was it finally shown that the Greek language was much older than had been believed.⁸

There has been frequent need for revision of theories in recent years. Much of this, perhaps, is due to the great amount of archaeological effort being put forth and the consequent volume of data brought to light. Today there is a strong demand for early reporting. A few decades ago, it was regarded as rather unscholarly to announce discoveries and draw conclusions except after exhaustive study of all that had been uncovered. Months and years might elapse before an official report was published. Today the demand is for comprehensive reports as early as possible, reserving the detailed technical treatment for a later time. This practice of early reporting is eagerly received, for there is a freshness and excitement about getting immediate data. But short-notice

reporting may call for a certain amount of conjecture; therefore, we must be willing to accept revision of theories when all the parts have been put together.

Sometimes revision has come without the need for additional data. Other scholars using the same data have come to a different conclusion. Such was the case with Woolley's flood layer, previously mentioned. Woolley was persuaded that an eight-foot layer of water-laid clay at Ur was the result of a single great inundation. Besides the fact that it appeared to be a single deposit, Woolley observed that those who settled the site after the flood buried their kings on what had been the rubbish heap of the pre-flood people--an indication that the former people had completely perished from memory.⁹ But other competent observers attributed the clay deposit to the fact that the river had changed its course and flowed over the site for a long period, and this is the prevailing opinion now.

Nelson Glueck's blast furnaces provide another instance of reinterpretation of the same data. Glueck, working at Ezion-Geber, Solomon's industrial city on the Red Sea, discovered a building located in an open area where the northwest winds blew incessantly. There appeared to be funnels in the side of the building to conduct blasts of air. Glueck theorized that the building was a copper smelter employing the blast furnace--a principle not to be rediscovered until about one hundred years ago. No less a medium than the National Geographic Magazine¹⁰ heralded Glueck's report and it became incorporated into many textbooks. However, Rothenberg¹¹ and others found a different explanation. When the building, which is now believed to have been a storehouse-granary, was burned, the heat from the cross-timbers embedded in the wall, crumbled the masonry, leaving funnel-shaped holes. Glueck himself was persuaded of this later and graciously retreated from his original position.¹²

There are frequent instances where the acquisition of new data has forced the revision of an earlier theory. Jericho, for example, has been dug up several times with varying conclusions concerning the evidence. Garstang, from his work begun in 1929, thought he had indeed found the walls of Joshua's Jericho, and he set the date of their fall at about 1400 B.C.¹³ Dr. Kathleen Kenyon, however, excavating more recently, has dated the same walls much earlier. She reported that with a few exceptions all of Joshua's Jericho has been eroded away.¹⁴

The University of Chicago, in one of the most ambitious digs undertaken, excavated Megiddo and found what was then believed to be Solomon's stables and chariot houses which are mentioned in the Bible.¹⁵ Yadin more recently has traced the stratum to other parts of the mound and is persuaded that the mangers and stables belong to a time later than Solomon, probably to that of Ahab.¹⁶

The acquisition of new data may not call for revision. Sometimes it only confirms the prevailing view. When the Dead Sea Scrolls were first found, there was considerable doubt that they were as old as Albright's appraisal. Constant acquisition of other scrolls, discovery of the Qumran Monastery, and other cave occupation has tended to bear out the accuracy of the original appraisals, however.

Many problems in Biblical research remain unsettled. This is disconcerting to many, for it is the nature of the human mind to avoid uncertainty and insecurity. A pronouncement one way or the other is seized upon to set the mind at rest. Nevertheless, sincerity in the quest for truth demands that we withhold judgment until sufficient evidence is obtained to reach a conclusion.

Sometimes, unhappily, the acquisition of new data only leads to greater confusion. The date of Israel's exodus from Egypt and conquest of the land is one of these knotty problems. Another long-standing puzzle which has been further complicated by more recent data has to do with the location of the walls of Jerusalem. Kathleen Kenyon has made an investigation of the north wall of Jerusalem and of the walls on Ophel, the old Jebusite city and the original city of David. Hennessy has given attention to the location of a south wall which was supposed to have joined the tip of Ophel to the Western Hill, thus enclosing the Pool of Siloam and the Tyropean Valley. As in the case of Joshua's walls at Jericho, so with the walls of Jerusalem, Miss Kenyon's discoveries have brought into question some long-entertained theories.

The Church of the Holy Sepulcher, now within the walls of the old city of Jerusalem is the traditional site of the crucifixion and burial of Christ as believed for centuries by the Roman and Greek churches as well as numerous Protestants. But many Protestants rejected the site on the grounds that it lay inside the walls of the city in Jesus' day. The traditionalists proposed that the north wall turned southward near what is now the Damascus Gate, forming a reentrant angle thus leaving the present site of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher outside of the city. Macalister years ago, employing deductive reasoning, demonstrated that the north wall surely must have gone directly west with no angle in it.¹⁷ Miss Kenyon, resorting to the spade, found no wall running west. Furthermore, she found that Nehemiah's wall, constructed in fifty-two days, apparently did not embrace the western hill and that his wall on Ophel enclosed only a very restricted area.¹⁸ If Kenyon reads the evidence correctly, the many gates of Jerusalem listed by Nehemiah must have been in quite different locations than has generally been assumed. Hennessy, too, could find no evidence of an Old Testament wall to the Western hill enclosing Siloam and the Tyropean Valley.

Are Miss Kenyon's conclusions correct? We can only wait and see. Hardly enough data have been accumulated as yet to place any view on unshakable ground. Meanwhile, our theory, tentative though it may be, must be framed in the light of our present knowledge.

In summary we may make the following observations:

1. The archaeologist employs the scientific method of obtaining facts; consequently, he endeavors to be as objective as possible.

2. Nevertheless, subjective factors must enter into the process of integration and interpretation of data. Because of this, as with any other science, the conclusions drawn from the observed data are subject to revision.

3. Awareness of this fact should prevent the Bible student from becoming disturbed when revision is necessary.

4. He should also be aware that conclusions based on archaeological discovery vary in reliability with the quality and quantity of objective data supporting them.

5. The sincere student should be ever willing to admit new data as evidence if they have been validly obtained, no matter how much they may tend to unseat a presently held theory. This is not to advocate a position of utter relativism. One may hold convictions concerning certain absolutes, but he should be aware that all of his convictions may not be absolutes. Some may be biases. The true absolutes will always stand the test of truth.

6. By the same token, in relating archaeological discovery to the exposition of the Bible, one must be careful not to overstate the case.

7. Even though not a specialist in archaeology, the Bible teacher or minister should, within the limits of his ability, try to evaluate the degree of certainty associated with an archaeological datum. He should weigh the source, the quality, and quantity of evidence supporting any given position. If it seems speculative, statements made pertaining to it should be so qualified.

DOCUMENTATION

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TEACHER AND RABBI IN THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD

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Joseph Klausner¹ observed that Graetz² holds the view that the name rabbi used in the Gospels is an anachronism, the reason for this conclusion being given, as Goodenough observes, "because it does not follow later rabbinic usage," the anachronism lying "in taking the later rabbinic usage as valid in the early period since for this period we have only the New Testament to certify."³ Of course we do not accept as necessarily valid such a conclusion even if the New Testament were to present the only known evidence, on the grounds that other evidence might be forthcoming. As a matter of fact, we believe there is other evidence from contemporary literature and archaeology to verify the accuracy of the New Testament picture of a Rabbi-teacher-pupil complex in the early part of the first century A.D.

Albright, in commenting on the ascription to Jesus of the Aramaic name rabbi (literally "my master") or the Greek equivalent didaskalos (literally "teacher") in John, states that the arguments that the number of passages where such terms are so ascribed show the relative lateness of that Gospel to the Synoptics since "these terms are much more frequent... in the former than in the latter" and "that a teacher would not be called rabbi in the time of Christ," based on the claim that this was a Tannaitic development—such arguments are negated by Sukenik's discovery of the term didaskalos inscribed on a pre-A.D. 70 ossuary referring to the person whose bones were interred therein.⁴

Albright goes on to say that further study of didaskalos, both archaeologically and linguistically, needs to be made,⁵ and it is our purpose to make such an investigation of both rabbi and didaskalos using evidence such as that set forth by Sukenik.

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THE WORDS RABBI AND DIDASKALOS USED
IN LITERATURE OF THE NEW TESTAMENT PERIOD

In the New Testament the word rabbi is restricted to the Gospels⁶ in which it is learned that it was a title sought by Jewish religious leaders (Matthew 23:7), was employed in a popular or semi-popular manner by the crowds (John 6:25), and even by a religious leader such as Nicodemus (John 3:2). Jesus is addressed a number of times as "Rabbi" by His disciples (Matthew 26:25; Mark 9:5; 11:21; 14:45; John 1:49; 4:31; 9:2; 11:8), and even by women in Christ's group (John 20:16). Even a wilderness preacher, such as John the Baptist, is called "Rabbi" by his followers (John 3:26). A caritative form, rabbouni (rabboni) is found in Mark 10:51⁷ and John 20:16.

That the terms rabbi and didaskalos are understood in the Gospels as equivalents is seen in John 1:38⁸ and John 20:16.⁹ The complex of rabbi-didaskalos and mathētēs (disciple, learner), that is, the master-teacher and his group of followers,¹⁰ is presented regarding Jesus and His disciples in John 1:37-38; 4:31; 9:2; 11:8, and also of John the Baptist and his group (John 3:26).

That Josephus does not use the term rabbi can be explained by observing that this author is writing in defense of his Jewish nation at least in part from a Roman viewpoint in which he stresses major military and political matters. He brings in religious material, as in his discussion of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes, when necessary explanation is needed. It is to be observed that this first century A.D. Jewish author does not even mention Hillel, Shammai, or Gamaliel (except, as far as the last name is concerned, as father of Simeon¹² and of Jesus the high priest).¹³

As a possible equivalent of rabbi, Josephus uses the term sophistēs (J.W. I, 648, 650; II, 10: Ant. XVII, 152; XVIII, 155),¹⁴ and possibly exēgētēs (Ant. XVII, 214, 149). That this kind of substitution in terms is made is not too startling when it is realized that Josephus does the same with the word sunagōgē which he uses only in Life 277 and 280 (in the latter section the participle sunagomenon is employed), his normal term for the concept being proseuchē (Life, 293).

Not too frequently does Josephus employ the term didaskalos, one interesting use being his reference to Jesus as didaskalos of men (Ant. XVIII, 63).¹⁵

Philo, the Alexandrian Jew, does not use the term rabbi, but this is no wonder since the word was just coming into use in Palestine at his time, and this author writes from an Alexandrian and, in part, a Greek

philosophical viewpoint. He uses frequently the Septuagint which, of course, was written at a time before the use of the term rabbi. Philo does, however, show understanding of the rabbi—didaskalos complex in the employment in his writing of the word didaskalos with manthanō (On the Change of Names, 270, 88; Special Laws IV, 107; cf. Special Laws I, 318), and also of sophistēs¹⁶ (an equivalent of didaskalos) with manthanō (Posterity and Exile of Cain, 150), as well as the use of huphēgētēs with the same verb (On the Change of Names, 217).

The Apostolic Fathers do not use the term rabbi, which would be expected since the New Testament church, especially after the fall of Jerusalem, was developing in a way distinct from Judaism. Didaskalos does occur but rather infrequently, one use being a reference to "Jesus Christ our only didaskalos" (Ignatius, Mag. IX), and another to Polycarp as a didaskalos episēmos, famous teacher (Martyrdom of Polycarp. XIX, 1).

Rabbi does not appear in the Dead Sea Scrolls material¹⁷ although there are a number of references to rab ("much, many, great"),¹⁸ which word also occurs in the Old Testament Hebrew text.

The Syriac Peshitta of the 5th century A.D.¹⁹, although bearing late testimony, interestingly translates didaskalos by rabbi where pronominal suffixes were added.²⁰

The second Latin recension of the Apocryphal Gospel of Nicodemus: The Descent of Christ Into Hell relates that three Galilean rabbis witnessed the ascension of Jesus,²¹ but this witness is late and proves nothing.

RABBI AND DIDASKALOS IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL INSCRIPTIONS

The evidence for rabbi and didaskalos in archaeological inscriptions can be examined in two groups.²² First, there are those inscriptions found outside Palestine in Europe, the materials here being basically Greek (although sometimes Aramaic is found) until the third or fourth centuries A. D. when Latin became more and more prominent.²³ The other group consists of inscriptions found on archaeological remains inside Palestine,²⁴ these being written in Greek, Aramaic, and Hebrew.²⁵

There are some instances in this group when two of the languages are used together on the same stone remains.²⁶

In connection with European Jewish inscriptions, most of which are located in Italy, didaskalos is to be found among those in Venosa and those in or near Rome, the former inscriptions being basically from the 5th or 6th centuries A. D., while those from Rome come from the earliest centuries of the Christian era.²⁷

From Venosa comes an Aramaic inscription (Frey, No. 594) with a questionable reading which may be translated, "Severa, daughter of Jacob. Peace"; but the expanded Greek on the same remains reads, "Here lies Severa, daughter of Jacob, the teacher (didaskalos);²⁸ may her sleep be in peace."

From Rome (via Portuensis) there is an inscription on a plaque of marble which might possibly be from the first or second centuries A.D.²⁹ It reads: "Here lies Eusebis, ho didaskalos nomomathēs (the teacher, learned in the law)...." (Frey, No. 333).

The inscriptions in Palestine regarding rabbi—didaskalos are more numerous and revealing. One of the latest is an Aramaic inscription from a sixth century synagogue at Beth Alpha in Galilee (Frey, No. 1165), which in a broken text includes the word rabbi. Another Aramaic inscription from the fifth century in the synagogue at El-Hammeh in Transjordan speaks of a Rabbi (rab) Tanhum, the Levite (Frey, No. 857).³⁰ An Aramaic inscription in a mosaic at Sepphoris in Galilee, dated in the third or fourth centuries A.D.³¹ speaks of Rabbi Judan, the son of Tanhum (Frey, No. 989), and in the same area a funeral inscription also mentions the same Rabbi (Frey, No. 990). From Er-Rama in Galilee comes an Aramaic third century grave inscription which speaks of Rabbi Eliezer, son of Tedeor (Theodor) (Frey, No. 979).³² The considerable number of inscriptions in Greek, Hebrew, Aramaic, and Palmyrene, found in the Jewish necropolis (dated in the first four centuries A. D.) at Beth-Shearim in Galilee, have several references to rabbi both in Greek and Aramaic from about the third century A.D.³³ Some of these inscriptions are mixed Aramaic and Greek (e.g., Frey, Nos. 1039, 1041, 1052, 1055, 1158), although the majority are in Greek. The Aramaic inscriptions speak of Rabbi Isaac (Frey, No. 994) and of another rabbi whose name is not preserved in the incomplete inscription (Frey, No. 1055). The Greek inscriptions given by Frey speak of Rabbi Isakos (Nos. 995, 1033), Rabbi Paregorios (Nos. 1006, 1041), Rabbi Joseph (No. 1052), and Samuel, the didaskalos (No. 1158). This last inscription in the midst of the others, which in Greek and Aramaic speak of rabbi, suggests that at this date the two terms, rabbi and didaskalos, could be taken as equivalents. As a matter of fact, the rather frequent reference to rabbi in this grave complex suggests that here we have buried a family of scholars.³⁴ Among the Greek inscriptions, of interest is the spelling ribbi³⁵ for rabbi in two cases (Frey, Nos. 1006 and 1052).

In coastal Palestine a Joppa Jewish necropolis yields a considerable quantity of inscriptions (70)³⁶ to be dated in the first centuries, a good number appearing to be from the second and third centuries A.D. It has been shown that a number of the names of rabbis inscribed here are of those known from Jewish literature.³⁷ Of the four inscriptions which

contain the word rabbi, three are in Aramaic and one in Greek, the former speaking of Rabbi Tarphon (or Tryphon) (Frey, No. 892), Than(k)-oum, the son of the Rabbi (Frey, No. 893),³⁸ and Hanania, son of Rabbi [Laza]rus, of Alexandria (Frey, No. 895). Actually the inscription in which the Greek form of rabbi (rab) is to be found (Rab Juda) is in both Aramaic and Greek, (Frey, No. 900).³⁹

At Noarah (Ain Dûk) near Jericho there was found an Aramaic inscription with the name of Rabbi Safrah (Frey, No. 1199), which inscription has been dated on the one hand as late as the fourth to sixth centuries A.D. (by Frey and Clermont-Ganneau) and on the other as early as the time of Herod the Great, (argued by Vincent).⁴⁰

A group of Jerusalem ossuary inscriptions, some of which refer to rabbi or didaskalos, are dated between 200 B.C. and A.D. 200.⁴¹

The Aramaic ones refer to Rabbi Hana (Frey, No. 1218) and Ben Rabban⁴² (Frey, No. 1285). Although the title Rabbi is not given to the name, reference to a Gamaliel is made in an Aramaic ossuary inscription (Frey, No. 1353), which Sukenik takes to be from around the time of Christ,⁴³ such a reference possibly being a reference to the Gamaliel who taught Paul (Acts 22:3).⁴⁴

Two Greek inscriptions found on ossuaries among several others containing both Greek and Aramaic writing, discovered on the slopes of the Mount of Olives (Frey, Nos. 1264-1272) seem to speak (the words are abbreviated or misspelled) of Theomnas, the d(i)[da](s)kalou (No. 1269) and of some other didaskalos not specifically identified (No. 1268).⁴⁵

Another in the same group (Frey, No. 1266) is of particular interest. Sukenik dates it at the time of Christ.⁴⁶ The fact that the inscriptions on this ossuary are bilingual, Theodotion in Aramaic being on one side and didaskalou on the other, suggests the possibility that as the Aramaic Theodotion is equivalent to Greek theodotion so the Greek didaskalos (which does not seem to have been used in transcription into Aramaic) is equivalent to the Aramaic rabbi. Here is evidence that didaskalos was used in the New Testament period in a capacity as teacher-Rabbi.⁴⁷

Of uncertain date are Aramaic inscriptions found in and near Jerusalem with the words, R. Kaleb...R. Joseph⁴⁸ (Frey, No. 1403, El-Aqsa) and Rabbi Jehuda (No. 1410, from the northwest of Jerusalem near the way to Jaffa, and a Greek inscription with the words rabbi Samuel (No. 1414, from unknown origin). Also of uncertain date are Aramaic inscriptions found at Naoua on the wall of a mosque which has only a possible questionable reference to Rabbi Judan and Rabbi Levi (Frey, No. 853); and another on a pillar before a synagogue at Thella⁴⁹ which speaks of Rabbi Mathiah (Frey, No. 971).

The testimony to the occurrence of both rabbi and didaskalos in Jewish inscriptions is consistent from the sixth century A.D. back to the time of Christ, both in the few references in Rome-Venosa inscriptions, and the more numerous ones of Palestine. In two or three instances the conclusion is to be drawn that rabbi and didaskalos are equivalent, not only in the later time of the third century A.D. at Beth Shearim (Frey, Nos. 994, 1055, 1006, 1041, and 1052), but also at the time of Christ in Jerusalem (Frey, No. 1266), this usage showing up to be the same as that described in the New Testament where rabbi can be interchanged with teacher.

THE USE AND MEANING OF RABBI—DIDASKALOS

Having established the fact that the terms rabbi and didaskalos are to be found in and belong to the first century A.D., we then observe that in the New Testament one of the clearest illustrations that the two terms are to be taken as equivalents in meaning can be seen in Matthew 23:8 where Christ warns His disciples against their taking the title, "Rabbi," because (gar) He alone is their didaskalos, and in John 1:38 and 20:16 where rabbi (John 20:16, rabbouni) is interpreted as didaskalos. That the equation is to be taken at face value in John 1:38 is to be seen in a similar obvious equation between Messias and Christos in John 1:41. Sometimes, however, kurios and epistatēs are equivalents of rabbi (Mark 9:5, rabbi compared with Matthew 17:4, kurie, and Luke 9:33,⁵⁰ epistata; and Mark 10:51, rabbouni with Luke 18:41, kurie) and didaskalos (Mark 4:38, didaskale compared with Matthew 8:25, kurie and Luke 8:24, epistata; and Mark 9:17, and Luke 9:38 didaskalos compared with Matthew 17:15, kurie).⁵¹

In the New Testament the title "Rabbi" was one sought by religious leaders, evidently for its flattering effect (Matthew 23:2, 7), is used by disciples of their teacher (John 9:2), is used in a popular general sense by the general public (John 6:25), is a term of respected authority (Mark 9:5) of one coming from God himself (John 3:2), and is a term of endearment (Rabboni, John 20:16).

In the contemporary New Testament literature the "doctors" or teachers (sophistai) were considered to be experts in the law (Josephus, J.W. I, 648) and they (hoi didaskontes) were to be respected and obeyed (Philo, On Dreams II, 68). In the Apostolic Fathers special attention is called to Christ, our only teacher (didaskalos) (Ignatius, Mag. IX) and to Polycarp, a famous teacher (Martyrdom of Polycarp XIX, 1).

Although inscriptions could not be expected to yield much in the way of doctrine⁵² in relation to the fuller meaning attached to rabbi and didaskalos, they now and again reveal additional information as to the import of the concepts and to the type of person who bore the title. In the third and fourth centuries A.D. rabbis were honored as having helped mon-

etarily with a building (as at Sepphoris, Frey, No. 989) such as an inn (at Er Rama in Galilee, Frey, No. 979). In an inscription of questionable date Rabbi Mathiah is commemorated for having given money for the construction of a pillar before the synagogue at Thella (Frey, No. 971). It cannot be proved, however, that the persons were addressed as "rabbi" for having contributed such funds. One rabbi (Tanhum) is identified as being a Levite (Frey, No. 857), and one (Rabbi Samuel) on a Jerusalem inscription is called chief of the synagogue (Frey, No. 1414). On one of the early Roman inscriptions the title didaskalos is enriched with the adjective, nomomathēs, learned in the law (Frey, No. 333, Rome, via Portuensis).

In summary, it is to be observed that rabbi together with didaskalos began to be used for the idea of teacher-master at about the time of Christ, as is evidenced by the New Testament Gospels and some early archaeological evidence from inscriptions, and the corroborative evidence from Josephus and Philo in the use of equivalent terms. Then as the transition between the Jewish economy and Christian Church continued, the term rabbi no longer had a place in the latter as is evidenced by the lack of the use of the term rabbi in the New Testament outside of the Gospels.⁵³ Even didaskalos outside the Gospels is sparingly used in the Acts and the Epistles, this latter term seeming to be reserved basically for Jesus (compare also Ignatius, Mag. IX, Jesus Christ, our only didaskalos). This is corroborated in the Apostolic Fathers where rabbi doesn't occur at all and where didaskalos is used but relatively infrequently.

But on the other hand, as Judaism continued and developed in its own way, the title "Rabbi" became increasingly important in Jewish practice and tradition as is evidenced by Talmudic tradition.

How much official technical significance the title rabbi—didaskalos carried in the New Testament period would be hard to determine on the basis of the literary and archaeological records. We do know that, according to the New Testament Gospels, the scribes and Pharisees desired the title (Matthew 23:2, 7), that it was used of formally unschooled teachers⁵⁴ such as John the Baptist and Jesus by their inner circle of disciples (mathētai) and by the crowds, and that it carried with it a sense of respect and authority. Beyond that, the early evidence does not allow us to go.

DOCUMENTATION

1. Joseph Klausner, Jesus of Nazareth, translated by H. Danby (New York: Macmillan, 1945), p. 43, footnote 93, and p. 256, footnote 16.
2. Graetz, Geschichte der Juden, III, 2⁵, 759; IV³, n.9, pp. 399-400; through Klausner, op.cit., pp. 29, 43.
3. Erwin R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, Vol. 1, (New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series, XXXVII, 1953), p. 90, footnote 200.
4. W. F. Albright, "Discoveries in Palestine and the Gospel of John," in The Background of the New Testament and Its Eschatology, Studies in Honor of C.H. Dodd, edited by W.D. Davies and D. Daube (Cambridge: At the University Press, 1964), pp. 157, 158.
5. He states, "It should be added that the treatment of this term in G. Kittel's Theologisches Wörterbuch Zum Neuen Testament, Vol. II (1935), p. 154 (and in general on pp. 150-62) needs further amplification archaeologically and linguistically; e.g., it should have been emphasized that rabbounai (John 20:16) like the corresponding rabbinic expression, is a caritative of rabbi standing for *rabboni, 'my (dear [or] little) master.'" Albright, op.cit., p. 158.
6. Dalman observes: "The interchange of u and o in pronunciation can also be seen in other cases...sousanna, Luke 8:3 for shōshannah and the Palmyrenian lakoubos for the name Jakob." G. Dalmen, The Words of Jesus, authorized English version by D. M. Kay (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902), p. 324, footnote 3.
7. MSS. D it. have kurie rabbi.
8. I.e., "Rabbi (which is to say, being interpreted, didaskalos)."
9. Where the form is rabboni: "Rabboni, which is to say, didaskalos." MSS. D Θ latt. have rabbōni.
10. In the Tosefta it is stated: "He who has disciples and whose disciples again have disciples is called 'Rabbi'..." I. Broydé, "Rabbi," in The Jewish Encyclopedia, I. Singer, ed., vol. X (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1912), p. 294.
11. Disciples of John begin to follow Jesus at this point.
12. Life, 190, 191.
13. Ant. XX, 213, 223.
14. On J.W. I, 648, the Loeb note translates sophistai "doctors" and comments, "'Greek sophists.' The Greek term originally free from any sinister associations, for a paid professor of rhetoric, etc. is employed by Josephus as the equivalent of the Jewish 'Rabbi.'" Josephus, The Jewish War in The Loeb

Classical Library, Vol. II (New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1927), pp. 306, 7, footnote. It is to be observed further that the term sophistēs would be better understood by Roman audiences.

15. It is to be observed, however, that this is a disputed passage.
16. The term Josephus also used; see above.
17. See Karl Georg Kuhn, ed., Konkordanz zu den Qumrantexten (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1960).
18. Francis Brown, S.R. Driver and Charles A. Briggs, A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament (New York: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1907), "rab."
19. F.F. Bruce, The Books and the Parchments, rev. edition (Westwood, N.J.: Fleming H. Revell, 1963), pp. 194, 5.
20. G. Dalman, The Words of Jesus, authorized English version by D.M. Kay (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1902), p. 338.
21. E. Hennecke, New Testament Apocrypha, The Gospels, vol. 1, ed. by W. Schneemelcher, tr. by R. McL. Wilson (London: Lutterworth Press, 1963), pp. 478,9; also Actas de Pilato, red. latina B, I, 1, 5, in Los Evangelios Apocrifos, ed. by Aurelio de Santos Otero, 2nd edition (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1963), pp. 455-458.
22. Following the division given by P. J.-B. Frey, Corpus Inscriptionum Judaicarum, vol. I, Europe; vol. II, Asia-Africa (Rome: Pontificio Instituto di Archeologia Cristiana, 1936 (vol. I), 1952 (vol. II).
23. "Outside Palestine the names and little inscriptions are predominantly in Greek till the third or fourth centuries, then in Latin." E.R. Goodenough, Jewish Symbols in the Greco-Roman Period, vol. 12 (New York: Pantheon Books, Bollingen Series XXXVII, 1965), p. 51.
24. According to Frey's second volume on Asia-Africa (op.cit.), occurrences of Rabbi—didaskalos in that volume are to be found only on Palestinian inscriptions.
25. Gundry notes that from archaeological data "proof now exists that all three languages in question - Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek - were commonly used by Jews in first century Palestine." R.H. Gundry, The Use of the Old Testament in St. Matthew's Gospel (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1967), p. 175.
26. Compare Gundry, op.cit., p. 176.
27. For the inscriptions of Venosa, dating from the sixth century after Christ, still present us with substantially the same picture as those of Rome, the oldest of which probably belong to one of the earliest centuries of our era." Emil Schürer, A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ, Second Division, tr. S. Taylor and P. Christie, vol. II (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1891), p. 247.
28. Thēgatēr lakōb didaskalou.

29. Frey says that "the catacomb was certainly now in use in the first century; but the second and third centuries was the period of greatest activity." Frey, op.cit.; vol. 1, p. 211.
30. See Goodenough, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 241.
31. See M. Avi-Yonah, "Mosaic Pavements in Palestine," Quarterly of the Department of Antiquities in Palestine, London, II (1932), p. 178; III (1933), p. 40.
32. Compare also Goodenough, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 213; and Avi-Yonah, Q.D.A.P. X (1942), plate XXVI, 8, and p. 131.
33. M. Schwabe in his work on Greek inscriptions found at Beth-Shearim in the fifth excavation season of 1953 suggests a date of the third or the first half of the fourth century A.D. for these inscriptions. Israel Exploration Journal, IV (1954), p. 260.
34. Compare Goodenough, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 90.
35. Compare the remarks of Dalman: "In the time of Jesus rabbôn had not yet become ribbôn." Dalman, op.cit., p. 324, footnote 3.
36. Frey, op.cit., vol. 1, p. 118.
37. Ibid., p. 119.
38. Frey says in a note that "biribi is a contraction for bir ribi (Jerusalem dialect), son of Rabbi, with which they would honor the doctors of the law." Frey, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 121.
39. "The title 'Rab' is Babylonian and that of 'Rabbi' is Palestinian." I. Broydé, "Rabbi" in The Jewish Encyclopedia, I. Singer, editor, vol. X, (New York: Funk and Wagnalls, 1912), Rabbi, p. 294.
40. While granting some problems regarding the paleography of the inscription, Vincent argues epigraphically and archaeologically for a date not later than the time of Herod, the Great, seeing in the Jordan Valley a blend of Jewish settlers (possibly the Idumeans) and free artistic energy in which animals and even the human figure are portrayed in architecture which fits in with this time. L.H. Vincent, Revue Biblique, XXVIII (1919), p. 558; S. A. Cook, "The 'Holy Place' of 'Ain Dûk,'" Palestine Exploration Fund, Quarterly Statement (1920), pp. 86, 87.
41. Frey, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 245.
42. Compare Dalman's remarks, "The Targumic mode of using ribbôn is recalled in Mark 10:51, John 20:16, by the term addressed to Jesus, rabbounei (another reading, rabboni; D Mark, rabbai; John rabbōnei....) Dalman, op.cit., p. 324. Charles in a note on Pirkē Aboth 1:16 says that Rabban was a title first used for Gamaliel to indicate his being the head of the house of Hillel. R.H. Charles, Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament, vol. 2 (Oxford: At the Clarendon Press, 1913), p. 686.
43. See Frey, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 305, who refers for this inscription to Sukenik, Jüdische Gräber Jerusalems um Christi Geburt, 1931.

44. It is interesting that in Acts 5:34 Gamaliel is called nomodidakalos timios panti tōi laōi.
45. The word there is somewhat deformed ΔΕΔΕΚΑΛΛΟΥ^{??}, which Frey readily recognized as didaskalou. Frey, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 267, 8.
46. Sukenik, Jüdische Gräber Jerusalems um Christi Geburt (1931), pp. 17f., through Frey, op.cit., vol. 2, p. 266.
47. Frey takes didaskalos in Nos. 1266 and 1269 as equivalent to rabbi. Frey, op.cit., vol. 2, pp. 267, 8. See also Albright, op.cit., p. 158.
48. The text here is uncertain.
49. See Josephus. J.W., III, 3, 1 for the location of this place.
50. Luke 9:33. P 45 has didaskale.
51. See Dalman's discussion, op.cit., pp. 327, 328.
52. Compare Goodenough, op.cit., vol. 12 (1965), p. 53.
53. Compare the fading use in the New Testament of another Jewish religious term, synagogue, as the New Testament ekklēsia becomes dominant.
54. Goodenough says, "the word was very casually used in early Christian circles with no reference to 'scholarship' of any kind...." Op.cit., vol. 1, p. 90.

THE CYRUS NOTATIONS OF DEUTERO - ISAIAH

RONALD E. MANAHAN

A recurring problem in our day is that of the Isaianic authorship of the entire book of Isaiah. The scope of this problem is enormous since Christ's own integrity is at stake in the question. Christ quotes from every portion of Isaiah's book and either assumes or states Isaianic authorship in each case. Therefore, to say that Isaiah is not the sole author of the book bearing his name is to undermine not only written revelation but also the personal revelation by God to us through His Son. In yet another sense the scope of this problem is awesome; so much written material is available on the subject. With respect to "Deutero-Isaiah" the problem concerning authorship centers about the geographical background, and therefore the chronological placement of chapters 40-66. To discuss this milieu of chapters 40-66 goes very far beyond the scope of this paper. But there is one particularly knotty problem which to a large measure will dictate the interpretation one gives to the background of Deutero-Isaiah. And that problem is the concern of this paper: The "Cyrus" notations of Deutero-Isaiah. In turn this paper will discuss the point of tension in the problem, several solutions that have been proposed by destructive criticism, and finally a palatable solution of the problem.

THE POINT OF TENSION

Critical attacks upon Scripture have been numerous. And the attacks are no longer simply made by those who have some claim upon scholarship. Nor are the attacks being confined to a few select places of apostasy; the attacks are now being waged through a host of Sunday school materials that have repercussions among those of the grass-roots level of Protestantism. A brief glance through the Sunday school materials of the main line denominations of America will support such an assertion.

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It is, of course, true that the Word of God has been attacked from all sides in the centuries of the Church's existence. Yet the present attack is more subtle than the attacks of the past. For one thing, many of the attacks are coming from within the ranks of the Protestant denominations. They are coming from those who purport to be theologians, those who supposedly are equipped to interpret Scripture. Another interesting fact about the present-day attack is that several assumptions are made with respect to Scripture which result in the undermining of what Scripture claims to be. One of these assumptions is that the empirical method has shown conclusively that miracles are impossible, for miracles defy the empirical method, therefore, they are impossible. Another assumption is that the critical approach to the study of Scripture, especially of the Old Testament, is the only intellectually acceptable approach of study. It therefore follows that critics who make such assumptions wish to supplant the orthodox position of the inspiration of Scripture with a notion more compatible with their own presuppositions. That notion has generally been some form dictated by the evolutionary approach to history and religion. The basic proposition of this notion is that the religion of mankind has evolved over the centuries developing from the most primitive forms of mythology, so called religion, to a more and more sophisticated, rationalized approach to God. This view believes that all the documents from the very earliest times reflect what people really thought about God. But because the more primitive peoples were unenlightened their conceptions of God were wrong.

To be sure, the variations of this evolutionary approach of the study of the Old Testament text have been numerous.¹ But in all of these variations there was a common belief: The Hegelian approach to history was the only sound approach. The view which Hegel took of history was this: "The only idea which philosophy brings with it [that is, to the contemplation of history] is the simple idea of reason, that reason dominates the world and that world-history is thus a rational process."² It is this imagination that world-history is a rational process that has so characterized the approach of the critics. As they approached the study of the Old Testament they assumed that all of ancient history must bow before the throne of reason. Therefore, when ancient documents asserted facts which would not bow before the throne of reason, the ancient documents, rather than reason, were questioned. But somehow the critics had to account for the record of the historical documents. Therefore, they posited theories of composition for the Old Testament, the end results of which would corroborate their initial assumptions.

Once the critics imagined that all the historical process would submit to their rationalization, they had immediately made a most drastic assumption: History would thus contain nothing of the supernatural. For their rationalizing method could neither account for a transcendent God who was also immanent nor recognize Him as such. All of this is not to

say that all critics are avowed disbelievers in the supernatural, but as Edward Young points out: "It must be confessed that among the advocates of recent critical theories the greater number do reject the working of God in any adequate sense in Israel's history."³ Once the critic has ruled out the possibility of the supernatural occurring in history he has positioned himself against the self-attestation of the Scriptural record.

The preceding discussion will serve to establish more clearly exactly what the point of tension is with respect to the mentions of Cyrus in the text of Isaiah. While the mentions of Cyrus in the text of Isaiah might seem to some very insignificant, they are in fact extremely crucial to the authorship of the Book of Isaiah and, therefore, to the integrity of the New Testament. The critics have long contended that Isaiah 40-66 are quite obviously not reflective of a Palestinian milieu. Rather, these chapters are believed to reflect an exilic milieu, a Babylonian background. If this assessment of the critic be right, then quite certainly Isaiah could not have written chapters 40-66 since he lived many years before the Babylonian exile. The Seventh-day Adventist Commentary puts the whole problem nicely into focus:

One of the chief arguments of these critics for a composite authorship of Isaiah is that chs. 40-66 appear to them to be written, not from the standpoint of an author living at the close of the 8th century B.C. but from that of one who lived near the close of the Babylonian captivity. The mention of Cyrus by name (chs. 44:28; 45:1) is regarded by them as conclusive evidence that these chapters were written during the time of Cyrus, that is, in the second half of the 6th century B.C.⁴

It is this Babylonian background, which is suggested by the naming of Cyrus, that forms the greatest point of tension between conservatives and the critics. J. Barton Payne quotes Edward J. Young as estimating the importance of the point this way: "The most formidable argument which must be faced by the defenders of the unity of the book is the one which maintains that the background of chapters 40-66 is Babylonian and not that of the eighth century B.C."⁵

At this point one might be prone to think that Babylonian notations in Deutero-Isaiah must, indeed, be many in number. But the real situation is to the contrary, for these notations of a specific nature are actually very few in number. Even C. C. Torrey maintained "that if the five or so references to Babylon and Cyrus could be eliminated as later insertions, almost all of chapters 40-66 could then be assigned to a Palestinian milieu."⁶ Thus the specific notations are indeed very, very few. Why is it then that the critics are so ready to see "Deutero-Isaiah" as Babylonian?

It is clearly not because the background of these chapters is replete with specific Babylonian notations. The answer to this question is to be found in the writings of the critics. For example, Robert H. Pfeiffer in his introduction comments in this sarcastic fashion on the two Cyrus notations: "Of course this anachronism offers no difficulty to those who believe that God predicted through Isaiah's pen what was to happen two centuries later."⁷ It is, then, quite clear from Pfeiffer's own words that the thing which makes the mentions of Babylon and Cyrus so repulsive to the critic is that if the single authorship of Isaiah be maintained, then clearly the Book of Isaiah contains predictive prophecy. And to admit to the existence of predictive prophecy is to admit to supernatural intervention in history. But as already pointed out the critic because of his own assumptions could not find such intervention in the historical process. Thus he refuses to allow such and therefore must posit some alternative explanation.

The real point of tension then in the Cyrus notations is that conservatives are most willing to allow for divine intervention in history, while the critics will not allow such intervention. Hence, the conservative finds predictive prophecy quite acceptable. But the critic rejects the possibility of predictive prophecy. He claims all prophecies were written down after the fact. Having established the particular point of tension, one can now better study the several details of this problem.

THE PROPOSED SOLUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM

The concern of this section shall be to look very briefly at several solutions which have been proposed to answer the problem under consideration. Obviously there exists a polarity among all the solutions proposed. Either one can accept the readings of Cyrus in the Isaianic text or he can reject them. If one chooses to accept the readings of Cyrus the only possible nuances of positions in this acceptance would be the particular material one might choose to support his view. However, if one should decide to reject the readings of Cyrus in the text, he is then placing himself open to many variations of interpretation. And he may call to his "support" a host of different materials. And it is indeed true that those who have rejected the readings of Cyrus in the text have taken virtually every position possible. The thrust of this section, then, shall be to look at several of the various positions that have been taken by those who have rejected the readings of Cyrus in the Isaianic text.

To be sure, some say that "Cyrus" is actually the reading in the text but certainly not as coming from the pen of Isaiah. Many are willing to concede that these two readings of "Cyrus" are quite acceptable if it is also admitted that a "Deutero-Isaiah" penned chapters 40-66. The history of criticism of the entire book of Isaiah is interesting for it shows so clearly the direction that the critic will take and the end result of his work. And

this applies directly to the critics' claims about the Cyrus notations. As early as 1167 Ibn Ezra cast some doubt on the Isaianic authorship of chapters 40-66 in what Pfeiffer refers to as "carefully veiled language."⁸ But such doubt was indeed very rare, for "until the period of the beginning of modern destructive criticism in the last half of the eighteenth century, the traditional belief in the Isaianic authorship of the entire book was practically universally held and unchallenged."⁹ This modern period of destructive criticism began perhaps with Koppe who as early as 1780 doubted the genuineness of chapter 50.¹⁰ But the first mighty blow was to fall in 1775 when J. C. Doederlein in his commentary on Isaiah suspected the genuineness of chapters 40-66.¹¹ Since that time, says the critic Pfeiffer, "it is generally recognized that it [Isaiah] comprises two distinct works."¹²

From this point onward the critics went to work. Rosenmueller, Eichhorn, Gesenius, and Ewald were leaders in the movement to find portions of the Book of Isaiah that were not really Isaianic.¹³ This critical approach proceeded until "by the middle of the 19th century some 37 or 38 chapters were rejected as no part of Isaiah's actual writings."¹⁴ Even Franz Delitzsch capitulated to the critical approach around 1880.¹⁵ But the division of a "Proto-Isaiah" and "Deutero-Isaiah" was not enough, for even "Deutero-Isaiah" began to disintegrate. Just before the turn of the 20th century men began to see a "Trito-Isaiah" in chapters 56-66. But the fragmentation did not stop there. As time passed the fragmentation multiplied until it seems to have reached a supreme expression in the work of Robert Kennett in his book, The Composition of the Book of Isaiah. After apparently detailed study of chapters 40-66 Kennett is able to say:

Unfortunately the literary criticism of these chapters shows that they are extraordinarily complex, and it is no easy matter, if indeed it is possible, to sort out the various passages according to their several authors. Nowhere has the hand of the editor done such drastic work, and it is much easier to analyze than to reconstruct. Many indeed be loth to believe that chapters of which the present effort is so beautiful can be a mere mosaic of fragments. The story of the Flood, however, in the book of Genesis is an illustration of the manner in which original documents could be rent asunder and recombined.¹⁶

Quite clearly Kennett sees a great deal of fragmentation in the authorship of Isaiah. But just how much fragmentation is there according to Kennett? George Robinson, writing in the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia, analyzes the above-mentioned work of Kennett, and finds this fragmentation:

(a) all of chs. 3, 5, 6, 7, 20 and 31, and large portions of chs. 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 14, 17, 22 and 23, may be assigned to Isaiah, the son of Amoz; (b) all of chs. 13, 40 and 47, and large portions of chs. 14, 21, 41, 43, 44, 45, 46 and 48 may be assigned to the time of Cyrus; (c) all of chs. 15, 36, 37 and 39, and portions of chs. 16 and 38, may be assigned to the period between Nebuchadnezzar and Alexander the Great, but cannot be dated precisely; (d) the passage 23:1-14 may be assigned to the time of Alexander the Great; (e) all of chs. 11, 12, 19, 24-27, 29, 30, 32-35, 42, 49-66, and portions of chs. 1, 2, 4, 8, 9, 10, 16, 17, 18, 23, 41, 44, 45, 48 may be assigned to the 2d. cent. B. C. (167-140 B. C.)¹⁷

On and on goes the process of fragmentation. And this has been the history of criticism in its destructive sense, and it is apparently the only route criticism can take as it departs from a position of complete inspiration of the text.

Now this process of historical fragmentation has, of course, had its effect upon the interpretations of the Cyrus notations. As well, it helps explain, partially at least, the many nuances of interpretation that have been taken with respect to the problem. Now the question is: How have different men handled these two Cyrus notations (44:28; 45:1)?

Generally speaking there have been two approaches taken to explain the naming of Cyrus in the text of Isaiah. One of these two approaches has been to regard the reading lekôresh as containing radicals which are different from those radicals of the original text. Several of the critics have imagined that somehow the radicals in the Hebrew text are not the right ones. Wordsworth, for example, interpreted lekôresh as really being lehârêsh; hence, the Hebrew radical waw was dropped and the holem was changed to a qames and the segol to a şere; thus the text would read "the crushed."¹⁸ By this understanding Wordsworth saw the one referred to here as "the crushed one," meaning Hezekiah. Later, however, he saw phronein in the LXX and "suggested that both readings resulted from the confusion in the mind of a scribe about 540 B. C., who thought that Isaiah ought to have written lekhôresh rô'î instead of a probable lâkh wêrâsh d'ê'î rô'î addressed to Jerusalem."¹⁹

Another who has made a similar approach to that of Wordsworth was Thirtle. He held that the original radicals were lehôresh not lekôresh.²⁰ Therefore, the original text made a reference not to Cyrus but to one who was an "engraver, cutter, artificer, or craftsman."²¹ He sees, therefore, that one radical supplants two.

But it is plain to see that men such as these do not have a particularly great reverence for the radicals of the Hebrew text. Once one is willing to concede that it is possible that the radicals have been tampered with, the question becomes not one of shall one change the text but one of where shall one change the text. Clearly the limiting factor in their changing the text is their own assumption of the background of the text.

But it must also be added that whether or not l^ekôresh is the textual reading, the context surrounding 44:28 and 45:1 must be handled, for it certainly points to Cyrus. For example, in comparing Isa. 41:2 and 25 is the revelation that this political leader of whom Isaiah speaks is one who would come from the east and would invade from the north. This is exactly what Cyrus did. Again look at Isa. 46:10-11 where a similar reference to Cyrus is made. And most assuredly Isa. 45:13 is a very pointed reference to Cyrus, for he it was who built "my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward." And again the words of Isa. 48:14-15 are too pointed a reference to Cyrus to be overlooked. The point to be raised is that not only the actual mentions of Cyrus are prophetic but so are the other passages concerning him. Therefore, the critic will not help himself by allowing a change of radicals until he first has done something about the other pointed prophecies of Isaiah in which the name of Cyrus is omitted.

The second approach to the Cyrus notations is that which imagines that the name is an interpolation or a gloss added to the text to help interpret it. Nagelsbach, who wrote in Lange's Commentaries, maintained this position of interpolation. He was willing to grant that in

xliv. 28 another word stood in the place of l^ekôresh and that [in] xlv. 1 the same word was either simply interpolated (which the construction allows), or was substituted for another word. We would need then, of course, to grant also that the words bišmekā ^akannēkā (xlv. 4), which manifestly presuppose the mention of the name, were inserted by the interpolator.²²

Exactly why it is that this author is so willing to concede to such an extensive process of interpolation in order to rid the text of Cyrus' name is not certain. It is not that he rejects the possibility of predictive prophecy. He concedes:

On the other hand the great mass of xl-lxvi are so unmistakably genuine prophecy; in fact the crown of all Old Testament prophecy, that we can ascribe them to no other than to the king among the prophets, to Isaiah. If now single passages in the last chapters bear undoubted

marks of originating in the exile, then they must be later additions to the original writing of Isaiah.²³

But how is one to decide exactly which passages "bear undoubted marks of originating in the exile?" Evidently for this author the specificity of the prophecy determines whether it is exilic. If God is able to reveal the future, of what consequence to His ability are the details of that future? There are, indeed, other details in Scripture prophesied long before they occurred. For example the naming of Josiah three centuries before he was born (I Kings 13:1f.) and the name of Bethlehem by Micah (Micah 5:2).

However, the understanding of interpolations and glosses as possible solutions to the problem of the Cyrus notations has not been limited to the segment of liberal theologians (as already indicated by the capitulation of Delitzsch). Those who would, I am certain, classify themselves in the class of conservative theologians have somehow believed that interpolation as a possible solution to the notations of Cyrus eases the problem for them. N. H. Ridderbos, professor of Old Testament at Free University, Amsterdam, admits that Isaiah 40-66 may have what he refers to as an "Isaianic core."²⁴ By this he means that Deutero-Isaiah, while having certain portions which clearly are from the hand of Isaiah, contains portions which, though not penned by Isaiah, are thematically consistent with Isaianic teaching. He does not oppose the notion that the utterances of prophets were handed down orally by a circle of Isaiah's disciples.²⁵ As the generations of his disciples passed, the kernels of thought directly from the hands of Isaiah were changed and adapted to meet the changing situations of the succeeding generations of people.

And sorry to say, even R. K. Harrison in his formidable introduction capitulates to the possibility of scribal glosses occurring in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1. Harrison claims that there are three possible interpretations of the naming of Cyrus.²⁶ Two of these three possible interpretations are quite obvious. They are the polarities already suggested: that of seeing Isaiah 40-66 as exilic and that of letting the text read as we have it, that is with the specific mentioning of Cyrus. Yet Harrison takes a third approach to the problem. He says:

A third approach to the problem, and one which is favored by the present writer, is to regard the references to Cyrus in Isaiah 44:28 and 45:1 as constituting explanatory glosses imposed upon the original text by a post-exilic copyist. It is of some significance that these two occurrences are the only instances in Isaiah where Cyrus is actually mentioned by name, and since they are found in such close proximity it seems most probable that they

comprise scribal additions inserted in order to explain what was thought to be the real significance of the prophecy.²⁷

While Harrison is not dogmatic about his position, he does find some comfort in knowing that there may well be a palatable third alternative. It is interesting that Harrison never really gives a valid reason for refusing to accept the reading of Cyrus as coming from the pen of Isaiah. Further, he does suggest that the close proximity of the two mentions of Cyrus would tend to corroborate the idea of scribal glosses. Yet it is interesting that especially in the first mention of Cyrus (Isaiah 44:28) the context would argue for the necessary inclusion of the name of Cyrus. And it is this inclusion of the name that makes the prophecy so remarkable. Allis' analysis of Isaiah 44:24-28 still stands as a formidable objection to the position that Harrison takes. Says Allis:

The most striking and significant features of the poem favor the view that while the utterance was significant in and of itself, it was chiefly significant in view of the exceptional circumstance under which it was spoken, i.e. in view of its early date. The chronological arrangement of the poem assigns the Restoration and Cyrus to the future. The perspective of the poem, together with the abrupt change of person in the 2d strophe, argues that the future is a remote future. And finally the carefully constructed double climax attaches a significance to the definiteness of the utterance which is most easily accounted for if this future was so remote that a definite disclosure concerning it would be of extraordinary importance.²⁸

The point of Allis is well taken and must be answered by all who would delete the name of Cyrus from the text.

Having now looked at several alternative solutions that various men have forwarded, what alternative solution may one find?

AN ALTERNATIVE PROPOSAL

The proposal to be suggested here is one already mentioned and alluded to in previous sections of this paper. And it is one which admits a crass honesty with the text and one which most definitely allows for the supernatural control of history and therefore the actuality of predictive prophecy.

First, it is worth noting that there is no evidence in the two Dead Sea scrolls containing Isaiah that chapters 1-39 ever existed independently of chapters 40-66.²⁹ It is admitted, of course, that these documents are not from the exilic period in date, but they do reflect a very definite textual tradition. Second, "writing about 180 B.C., the author of the book of Ecclesiasticus (ch. 48:23-28), Jesus ben Sirach, credited various sections of the book of Isaiah to the prophet whose name it bears."³⁰ Third, there are the numerous attestations to the single authorship of the book by Christ himself. For example, the following passages of Isaiah are quoted or alluded to by Christ and in each case Isaianic authorship is either stated or implied: Isaiah 56:1f. (Matthew 5:3); Isaiah 42:1-4 and 41:8f. (Matthew 12:17f.); Isaiah 56:7 (Matthew 21:13); Isaiah 66:24 (Mark 9:48); and Isaiah 61:1-2 (Luke 4:17-21).

But more decisive to this particular problem, though no more crucial perhaps, is the context in which the two mentions of Cyrus occur. The principal thrust of the context surrounding chapters 44 and 45 is that Jehovah God is infinitely more worthy and powerful than any idols of men. Over and over again are found sarcastic taunts of pagan idols (somehow reminiscent of Dagon and his inability to help himself). Note as an example the taunting words of Isaiah 40:18-21:

To whom, then will ye liken God? Or what likeness will ye compare unto him? The workman melteth and casteth an image, and the goldsmith spreadeth it over with gold, and casteth silver chains. He that is so impoverished that he hath no oblation, chooseth a tree that will not rot; he seeketh a skillful workman to prepare a carved image, that shall not be moved. Have ye not known?...

And along with the taunting sarcasm is a full-blown acknowledgement of God's foreknowledge. Again and again the point is made that while dumb idols know nothing nor say nothing about the future, the true God does:

The fact, however, that Isaiah mentions Cyrus is not an argument in favor of a late date for the book, but rather an evidence of the wisdom and foreknowledge of God. Throughout the book there are predictions concerning the future.... Indeed, Isaiah sets forth God's foreknowledge as eloquent testimony to his wisdom and power (chs. 41:21-23; 42:9; 43:9; 44:7, 8; 45:11, 21; 46:9, 10; 48:3, 5-8).³¹

And if the God of Israel has this particular ability, that of foreknowledge, the prophecy including the specific naming of Cyrus is not so unbelievable. In fact it is in this very sort of context that one would expect

to find such a prophecy. The prophecy enriches to a superlative degree the infinite ability of the true God. And it is this basic proposition that Isaiah is asserting in his prophecy. On the other hand it is difficult to see what would have been accomplished by an exilic writer including the name of Cyrus, for in that case the name would be only an historical notation. And if this were the case, it would seem like an exilic writer would have included many more detailed descriptions of Babylon if he would want his historiography to have credibility. Birks seems to have this line of reasoning in mind when he says that if Isaiah 40-66 were exilic, it is strange that so little is said of exilic contemporaries (names and person).³² It is also interesting that even the critics concede that Isaiah 40-66 clearly indicates God's power to control men.³³

A last argument in support of the acceptance of the reading of Cyrus in the text has already been suggested in the words of Oswald T. Allis. J. Barton Payne gives an excellent analysis of the Isaiah 44:24 - 45:8 passage, showing that the failure to mention the name of Cyrus would destroy the obvious procedural tendency of Isaiah in the passage.³⁴ Further, against the view that Isaiah would not have included the name of Cyrus in the passage since the text calls him "my servant" (and Cyrus was the avowed worshipper of Marduk), it may be said that God's control of a man who did not worship Him makes the power of God all the more vivid. It now remains for a concise conclusion to be drawn to this problem.

CONCLUSION

The only conclusion which seems appropriate for one who reverences the text of Scripture is to assume that the reading of Cyrus in the text is the only acceptable reading. Further, it is certain that the simpler understanding of the text is that Isaiah did, indeed, write the name of Cyrus. Any other interpretation of the text must struggle against the overwhelming evidence of the context. It is, therefore, as Pfeiffer put it: "Of course this anachronism offers no difficulty to those who believe that God predicted through Isaiah's pen what was to happen two centuries later."³⁵

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THE MEANING OF II KINGS 3:27

GEORGE M. HARTON

Jehoshaphat had a difficult time grasping the lessons that God wanted to teach him in the area of political allegiances with unbelieving nations, especially with "sister-nation" Israel to the north. But in spite of his failure to grasp this principle of God's, Jehoshaphat was honored by God for the righteous desires of his heart.

Thus we find him in the third chapter of the book of II Kings in league once again with ungodly Jehoram, and also with the King of Edom. Although He almost allowed these allied forces to perish in the desert, God still could not refrain from honoring the faith and life of Jehoshaphat:

And Elisha said (to Jehoram), As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, surely, were it not that I regard the presence of Jehoshaphat the king of Judah, I would not look toward thee, nor see thee (II Kings 3:14).

Elisha then went on to prophesy of the great defeat that would soon be visited by God upon the rebellious Moabites at their very hands.

We are not surprised when reading on through the chapter to see Jehovah begin to fulfill His word through His prophet Elisha. He caused the Moabites to mistake the abundant water provided for the Allies for blood flowing freely in the sunshine of early dawn, and to rush forth hastily in search of easy spoil. These eager warriors had their hopes spoiled in a devastating ambush that virtually annihilated their forces. Some were able to retreat and regroup in a nearby city, but even here it seemed only a matter of time before these bastions would also fall before the vicious allies who were felling all the trees in the land, stopping up the wells of water, and beating down all of the cities. Thus Mesha, King of Moab, mustered the strength he had left, seven hundred men, and thrust them forth on a mission of penetrating and breaking the enemy lines where the King of Edom had his forces deployed.

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When this "Battle of the Bulge" tactic failed, we expect to read of the total massacre of the remaining brash Moabites. But instead we find Moab with still one last desperation tactic, as we read:

Then he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and offered him for a burnt offering upon the wall. And there was great indignation against Israel: and they departed from him, and returned to their own land (II Kings 3:27).

Our shock at the sacrifice by Mesha of his eldest son is surpassed only by our surprise at the completion of the Biblical account of this military operation. We had been witnessing a dramatic, climactic fulfillment of prophecy, when we are unexpectedly left hanging in mid-air. Israel leaves the battlefield and leaves us with our mouths hanging wide open.

Why did the conflict end in this manner? What could the meaning of this verse be? The unfulfilled expectations and the ambiguous phrases of the verse leave us perplexed. The element of human sacrifice to those of us who have come into a new relationship with God by means of appropriating the benefits to ourselves of the voluntary, self-sacrifice of Jesus Christ adds further fascination and motivation to our wondering minds.

This paper will attempt to clarify some of these questions by examining the two leading problems in II Kings 3:27. The first problem is the identification of the meaning of Mesha's sacrifice and the second is the identification of the meaning of Israel's response to this sacrifice.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF MESHA'S SACRIFICE?

Obviously, the sacrifice of his eldest son was an act of desperation, but beyond this fact, what was Mesha's motive for doing so? What could he have hoped to accomplish?

Some find that the best way to account for this gruesome act is to plead temporary insanity on the part of the defendant in a manner similar to the defense of Sirhan Sirhan today:

In his madness he took his eldest son that should have reigned in his stead, and flung him for a burnt offering upon the wall.¹

Certainly such an explanation strikes home as being within the realm of possibility, especially as we hear repeatedly that hospitals are full of people with mental and emotional collapses over far lesser things. Nevertheless, such an explanation should be reserved for those who have failed to make any rational explanation fit the facts, for it is not a very satisfying answer.

Another desperate, though ancient, solution to the problem is the suggestion that Mesha sacrificed, not his own son, but the son of the King of Edom. The door to such a view was opened by the Septuagint which reads ton huion autou ("his son") instead of ton huion heautou ("his own son"), and Fathers such as Theodoret walked through the door.² The son could well have been taken captive during the preceding thrust into the territory controlled by the King of Edom, and the motive of revenge would have followed naturally after the frustrating failure of the attempted penetration. Support for this view is then also found in the words of Amos, who condemned Moab "because he burned the bones of the king of Edom into lime."³

But Dr. Bähr (Lange's Commentary) argues rather convincingly against this interpretation and offers several reasons why Amos 2:1 may not be used as a legitimate support.⁴ When all is said and done, this view is rather remote, and it would be far wiser to remain with the most obvious meaning that Mesha sacrificed his own son.

The majority are correct when they see this sacrifice as the product of Mesha's active faith in Chemosh, god of Moab. The Moabite Stone bears strong testimony to this religious zeal in the heart of Mesha:

"I am Mesha, son of Chemosh-...., king of Moab, the Dibonite. My father was king over Moab thirty years and I became king after my father. And I made this sanctuary for Chemosh at Qrchh, (a sanctuary of) salvation; for he saved me from all the kings and let me see my desire upon my adversaries. Omri, (5) king of Israel, he oppressed Moab many days, for Chemosh was angry with his land. And his son succeeded him and he too said, 'I will oppress Moab.' In my days he spoke (thus), and I saw my desire upon him and upon his house, when Israel perished utterly for ever. And Omri had taken possession of the land of Medeba and (Israel) dwelt in it his days and half the days of his son, forty years; but Chemosh dwelt in it in my days. And I built Baal-meon and made in it the reservoir, and I built (10) Qaryaten. And the men of Gad had long dwelt in the land of Ataroth, and the king of Israel had built Ataroth for himself. But I fought against the town and took it and I slew all the people of the town, a spectacle for Chemosh and Moab.... And Chemosh said to me...."⁵

We see very clearly in this tablet the Chemosh-centered life that Mesha led in which he interpreted all of his circumstances in terms of the activity and attitudes of the unseen god of Moab. Consequently, just as in the days

when Moab was oppressed by Omri, Mesha must have come to the conclusion that "Chemosh was angry with his land" when all of his military maneuvers ended in failure. Rather than continue a hopeless fight against his seen enemy, Mesha came to the end of himself and tried to placate the wrath of his alienated god by sacrificing the dearest thing to his heart, his eldest son.

Some go even a step further in stressing the fact that this offering took place upon the wall, thus indicating that Mesha did it publicly for Israel's benefit. This inference is not necessary, because it was normal to offer sacrifices from high places, but even if it be allowed, we must speculate concerning Mesha's strategy in letting Israel observe this awful deed. Did he, like Elijah, hope to demonstrate that his god was truly alive, while Jehovah was asleep? Did he know of the Jewish abhorrence of human sacrifice (Leviticus 18:21; 20:1-5), and hope that Israel might take upon herself the guilt for driving Moab to these extremities? Or did he suspect that their abhorrence might simply nauseate them and sap their drive for conquest? Such speculation does not merit any further thought because all of these motives are nullified by the observation of Dr. Bähr that if Mesha's act of sacrifice was a strategic move with Israel in mind, then it would have been pure folly to have sacrificed his own son, and successor to the throne.⁶ Mere human sacrifice would accomplish any of these speculative goals, but only the offering of his eldest son could placate the wrath of Chemosh.

Consequently, Mesha did not sacrifice the son of the King of Edom, but his own son; nor did he do it out of sheer madness or sharp strategy to overcome Israel. He did it in a sincere effort to regain the favor of his god Chemosh.

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF ISRAEL'S RESPONSE TO MESHA'S SACRIFICE?

Although Mesha may not have offered his son primarily with its effect upon Israel in view, he must have interpreted the subsequent retreat by the Israeli armies as the answer from Chemosh to his prayers and sacrifice. Why did Israel, on the verge of final and total victory, suddenly "return to their own land?" Is it possible that Chemosh did, in fact, strike terror into the hearts of the aggressors? Rawlinson scoffs at the very thought.⁷ But why did Israel retreat and what is the meaning of the phrase "there was great indignation against Israel?"

The Meaning of "There Was Great Indignation Against Israel"

Many commentators (e.g. Montgomery, Farrar, and Keil) make the observation that the Hebrew word for indignation is used almost exclusively to refer to divine wrath.⁸ Some have interpreted such divine wrath as the

wrath of Chemosh, and Kittel even assumed that "the wrath of Chemosh" once stood in the text; but most take the expression to mean the divine wrath of Jehovah.⁹

Most of those understanding this phrase in this normal sense of the wrath of Jehovah explain the cause of the wrath in terms of the Biblical injunction not to make human sacrifices:

As hâyâh qešep 'al is used of the divine wrath or judgment, which a man brings upon himself by sinning, in every other case in which the phrase occurs, we cannot understand it here as signifying the "human indignation".... The meaning is: this act of abomination, to which the king of the Moabites had been compelled by the extremity of his distress, brought a severe judgment from God upon Israel. The besiegers, that is to say, felt the wrath of God, which they had brought upon themselves by occasioning human sacrifice, which is strictly forbidden in the law (Lev. xviii. 21, xx. 3).¹⁰

But Bähr exposes some real problems in this viewpoint:

In this case, however, there is not a word to the effect that Israel had incurred guilt. That which had been brought about by the allied army, had taken place as the prophet had foretold (ver. 18sq.), and he had represented it as an especially great assistance of God. When, then, the king of Moab did something of his own accord which the Law strenuously forbade, that was his guilt and not Israel's.¹¹

Furthermore, we do well to recognize the conclusion which Dilling made following a detailed study of human sacrifice in the Bible, that such sacrifice is amoral in nature.¹² In Leviticus, for instance, all human sacrifice is not banned, but only the wrong use of it to appease heathen deities. The only sin and guilt in this passage is that of Mesha, and so why Jehovah should have suddenly turned against Israel must remain a mystery.

This mystery is better explained by viewing this indignation as a subjective, and not an objective experience; as a human, and not a divine, emotion. Although the impression is given by some that this phrase always refers to divine wrath, Bähr cites several passages in which it means human anger (dissatisfaction, resentment, bitterness).¹³ Even if these cross references did not exist, the preponderance of references to divine wrath could not rule out this interpretation, but merely make it more unlikely.

Thus Bähr takes the phrase to mean that the Israeli army lost heart, as does Rawlinson along with others.¹⁴ One notable variation was Josephus who understood this emotion, not as universal horror or fear, but as commiseration for the Moabites.¹⁵ Such a view has little to support it, but it does seem most satisfying to understand this emotion as the subjective experience of the Jews, and not as the anger of Jehovah directed against them.

Why Did Israel Return to Their Own Land?

Having determined the meaning of the "great indignation," we may fix its implications for our understanding of why Israel left the battlefield. It was probably not out of commiseration for the Moabites, because mercy was hardly a part of the code of battle ethics at that time, as witness what had already been wrought upon their heads (cf. v. 24, 25)! Neither was the retreat due to a sense of guilt and responsibility for causing Mesha to sin which brought a fear of the wrath of Jehovah into their hearts.

The most likely reason seems to be that Israel feared the retribution of Chemosh, and so they fled! Most of the commentators who take a critical approach to the Scriptures take this option (cf. Dentan, Gray, and Roland de Vaux), but this fact alone does not render the position invalid. Rawlinson and Jamieson, Fausset, and Brown are among the more conservative scholars who hold that this was the cause of the sudden retreat. Let us not forget that these people shared many of the superstitions of the people around them (cf. Judges 11:24), and furthermore, that many of the Israelites were unbelievers! They had been taught the importance of sacrifices, and now seeing such a sacrifice, fear gripped their superstitious hearts and they ceased the advance. This brings us to our final question.

Was the Victory Incomplete?

Through this sudden retreat did Israel then lose the battle? Of course not! We have already witnessed the full fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy, and so let us not get so caught up in this turn of events that we leave with the impression of defeat. Rather, because the prophecy had already been fulfilled and there remained only the malicious and greedy aggression for the spoil and annihilation of the enemy, it was that much easier to retreat when the malice turned to fear. From the standpoint of what could have happened, it was incomplete, but from the standpoint of the prophecy, it was complete.

CONCLUSION

By the grace of God, out of respect for Jehoshaphat, Israel was completely overwhelming the Moabites in fulfillment of Elisha's prophecy. Once that prophecy had been fulfilled, however, God did not allow the

Moabites to be totally annihilated. He allowed even the sacrifice of his own son by a pagan king in desperation and religious zeal to a false god as the means of striking fear into the hearts of this wayward and superstitious people; and this fear caused them to stop the attack and return home. God fulfilled His word through His prophet in honor of Jehoshaphat, but he also humbled the people at the close of the victory lest they be lifted up with pride.

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BOOK REVIEWS

SIR WILLIAM A. RAMSAY. By W. Ward Gasque. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1966, \$1.50. 95 pp.

Gasque's brief, tasteless biography of Sir William M. Ramsay disappoints this reviewer. A scholar of Ramsay's magnitude deserves a life history displaying his human qualities and the intellectual merit of his discoveries.

Gasque sketches three of Ramsay's main works: Luke the Historian, Paul the Missionary Statesman, The Seven Churches of Asia.

Gasque's explanations of how Ramsay collected and studied historical data preparatory to writing his famous works uncover a scholar meticulous in method and astute in arriving at conclusions. The way Ramsay arrived at answers to knotty New Testament problems is carefully described by Gasque in a manner that makes Ramsay's works easier to appreciate.

Actually, the chapter by Gasque entitled Paul the Missionary Statesman has a misleading title inasmuch as various Ramsay books on Paul are considered. In that chapter Gasque demonstrates the skill Ramsay used in his portrayals and researches concerning Paul.

Gasque hits the nail solidly on the head when he says:

In the writings of Ramsay it is Paul the man who is brought to life before the eyes of the student. The character of Paul takes on flesh and blood as the world in which he moved and the forces that molded his thoughts are unveiled for the reader, and when small--almost overlooked--details from the text of Acts or from one of his letters are breathed upon by Ramsay.

As Gasque points out, Ramsay's The Seven Churches of Asia displays how Ramsay emphasizes the importance of the historical approach to a correct understanding of the New Testament. Gasque cites the richness of historical details Ramsay used in his treatment of the letter to Pergamum (pp. 53, 54, Gasque's Sir William A. Ramsay).

In his introduction to Gasque's book, F. F. Bruce says of Ramsay:

He had received no biblical or theological training, but he acquired, by dint of his painstaking archaeological research coupled with his mastery of first-century literature, an unrivalled knowledge of the historical and geographical background of the apostolic age, especially where Asia Minor was concerned, and he used that knowledge effectively to illuminate the New Testament.

After all Sir William A. Ramsay was knighted not for his theological deficiencies but for his acumen in New Testament history. Bruce makes one other interesting observation about Ramsay:

The nineteenth-century Ramsay was a very great man... The twentieth-century Ramsay suffered in his scholarly reputation because he allowed himself to be persuaded by Sir William Robertson Nicoll to don the mantle of a popular apologist.

In view of the paucity of modern materials about Ramsay, Gasque's book will have to suffice. Perhaps the best observation about Gasque's work is that it is part of Baker Studies in Biblical Archaeology.

Benjamin A. Hamilton

Grace Theological Seminary

FAITH AT THE FRONTIERS. By Carl F. H. Henry. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969. \$3.95. 204 pp.

For many years the author of this challenging and interesting book was the editor of the conservative, fortnightly, theological journal, Christianity Today. The sixteen chapters of this volume constitute "addresses to American audiences that have not previously appeared in print." In the foreword, the author lists the various places where each address was given. This helps the reader to better understand the context in which it was delivered.

In reading the book, one cannot but help be impressed with the fact that Dr. Henry vigorously defends the inspiration of Scripture, pleads for a better understanding and application of the Bible, and commends to every Christian consistency of holy living and application of these Biblical principles in our daily life, both in testimony and social relationships.

It was most stimulating to read his addresses, and see how well the author proclaimed the truth of redemption and gave in a humble way his personal testimony of God's saving grace to such audiences as the men of Andrews Air Force Base, the faculty of Ohio State University, and the ministerial union of Pittsburgh and Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. To realize that here is a learned servant of God, who in a quiet dignified way is still able today to reach men in high places with the truth of Jesus Christ, should be a challenge to every Christian to let his light shine wherever he has influence.

This book should be read by Christians of every position in life, as a stimulating challenge to keep persisting in testimony whether by word or life, in the decadent world of today. God's truth is still able to change lives. This book is a worthy testimony to such a challenge.

John H. Stoll

Grace College

THE JEW AND MODERN ISRAEL. By Milton B. Lindberg. Moody Press, Chicago, 1969, \$.50. 96 pp. (paperback).

Some books are worth revision and reprint. This is the case with the work of Milton B. Lindberg, Director Emeritus of American Messianic Fellowship, as revised by present Director Archie A. MacKinney. The author cautiously relates modern events in Israel to prophecy. He accepts the prewritten Biblical story of the Jewish nation as an accurate forecast of future events. Lovers of the Jewish people will see present Israeli success as an earnest that God will fulfill His covenant.

The style of the book is interesting and the information thrilling to the believer's heart. Lindberg packs the book with facts and figures. His pictures and drawings are clear and relevant. The discussions on Israeli religious, economic and social situations are vital. Two appendices are included. The first appendix relates the 46 sieges of Jerusalem from King David (c. 1000 B.C.) onward. Appendix 2 is a calender of recent events in Israel's history (1882 A.D. - 1967 A.D.). Some very interesting discussions are on the East Gate (p. 66f.), the Star of Jacob and David (p. 78f.) and the 1967 Arab-Israel Blitz (p. 80f.).

The map on page four and the temple diagram on page seventy-one lack the alphabetical numbers to which references are made in the text. The reviewer would appreciate the identification of the Arabic newspaper mentioned on page sixty-eight.

James H. Gabhart

Community Church
Tippecanoe, Indiana

SONS OF TIV. By Eugene Rubingh. Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, 1969, \$5.95, 263 pp.

Rubingh's church history of the Tiv church in central Nigeria provides a very readable account of African church development in an African state heavily saturated with mission activities.

Many mission books of the past have been adulatory tributes to missionaries and their work. African Christians and their community and culture receive a more appropriate treatment in Rubingh's book than in the ordinary mission history.

In chapter 3 the book author treats Tiv traditions of their origin and migration, Tiv social organization, their traditional religion and the salient characteristics of the Tiv world-view. Such a chapter could be a ponderous collection of technicalities in less skillful hands. That Rubingh has provided a useful condensation of important aspects of Tiv cultural anthropology is explained by Rubingh's own words (p. 57):

Before we investigate the manner in which the Gospel was carried to the Tiv, we must delineate the milieu into which the Gospel message came. This task grows more difficult with the passage of time, for, as the Tiv would express the problem, the old mushroom is decaying and the new mushroom growing in its place. Furthermore, this chapter cannot provide in any sense a complete ethnography of Tiv society and its traditional institutions. Ten years with the Tiv have shown the author that he still has much to learn of the mythology and ethos.

Chapter 5, The Transformation of Tiv Society, expands the background material of chapter 3 by updating the topics concerned so as to give a contemporary view of Tiv life.

Chapter 1 of Rubingh's book is an introductory generalization of missiological principles, helpful in understanding mission developments of the past 40 years. Chapter 2, The Wider Context, looks at African history in a panoramic sweep, narrows the history to Nigeria, and concludes with the middle belt of Nigeria--home of the Tiv. Chapter 4 covers historical background of the Dutch Reformed missionary activities among the Tiv and assorted problems that confronted the missionaries. This reviewer considers chapter 4 as an excellent presentation of an area of mission history materials that too often is handled injudiciously and incompetently.

Chapter 6 of Sons of Tiv is addressed to the development of an indigenous Tiv church and chapter 7 is a future look toward tomorrow's Tiv church.

Rubingh's Sons of Tiv seems to this reviewer to be an adept treatise on Dutch Reformed missionary history among the Tiv of Nigeria. Features appealing to the reviewer are: Enlightening handling of data which while they might ordinarily bore the average reader become significant to the story Rubingh presents. The understanding consideration and presentation of problems associated with the building of a truly African church offers a more objective treatment of a difficult, fluid subject.

Rubingh wisely omits a subject index, using instead only an index of names. His use of bibliographical footnotes in place of a more formal bibliography at the back of the book is a more harmonious device for a book such as Sons of Tiv.

The absence of excessive tabular materials and a collection of artificially posed halftones of missionaries, converts and unreached Africans enhances Rubingh's book. A type face that is neither obtrusively large nor bordering on microscopic size is used. Proper leading and circumspect use of different type sizes make the reading of Sons of Tiv easier.

Congratulations to Baker Book House for Sons of Tiv both as to content and the appealing book jacket. The jacket design and blurbs are, for once, believable.

Benjamin A. Hamilton

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BOOKS RECEIVED

- THE TIME IS AT HAND. By Jay Adams. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Nutley, N. J., 1970 (revised edition). 123 pp., paper.
- THE BIBLICAL PHILOSOPHY OF HISTORY. By Rousas J. Rushdoony. Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, Nutley, N.J., 1969. 148 pp. \$2.95, paper.
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